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October 20th 1846

SERMONS

TO THE UNCONVERTED :

PREACHED IN THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR 1839.

BY THE

HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

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* * It may be well to apprise the reader, that these Sermons were preached extemporally.

SERMONS TO THE UNCONVERTED:

BY THE HON. AND REV. BAPTIST W. NOEL, M.A.

SERMON I.

THE UNCONVERTED INVITED TO A COMPLETE AND FREE SALVATION.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, AUG. 25, 1839.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Romans viii. 1.

THERE is something, my dear brethren, so melancholy, in the condition of those who are still unconverted, and pursuing their road through life under the anger of their Maker, without one solid hope for eternity, that I purpose to devote several sermons especially to their condition—hoping—praying—that God would be pleased to lead not a few of those in this congregation, who are still undecided and have never been led to "lay hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel" to do it without delay. And I ask the prayers of all, for those with whom they are associated in worship, and many of them in private life, that God would be pleased to bless what may now be addressed especially to them.

They may be in very various conditions. One (it may be) of those in this assembly to-day, who are still unchanged by grace, may be extremely ignorant of the Scriptures, and be able to give no account of the revealed way of salvation; while another may be perfectly familiar with the doctrines of the Gospel, and be abundantly able to maintain them all. One (it may be) may deny the doctrines, that he has heard stated and defended; while another may be perfectly convinced that they are true. One perhaps may have a sensible repugnance to every religious habit; while another may esteem religious persons, value religion itself, and often feel a wish that he was himself a religious man. It may be, that one perhaps is living in open and known sin, and pursuing in a most ungodly spirit

every aim in life; and another (it may be) has paid considerable attention to the law of God, and is in many matters conformed to its requisitions. "One perhaps may know that he is not a Christian, and may be braving the conviction that he feels; another may be deceived, and may fancy that he is already numbered amongst the children of God. One perhaps may have felt deep convictions of sin, which he has stifled and successfully overcome; in another those convictions may have lasted for a while, and then (as is often the case) subsided, so that they never led to a change of heart and life, and he may be mistaking those past convictions for conversion, and supposing that he is a Christian man because he has suffered so much more in his mind respecting sin and respecting religion than others have; another perhaps may be still under deep convictions of his lost state, and may know that he is no Christian, and may be doubting whether he ever shall become so. One perhaps may be thinking, that it is impossible for him at his time of life to make any great changes in his views or habits, and therefore be despondent respecting his ultimate state; another may in the pride of youth be thinking, that it is time enough, years still to come, for him to think of giving all his mind, all his affections to God. One (it may be), having had all the advantages of a religious education, has conformed to the habits impressed upon him, scarcely knowing why; while another (it may be), without any such advantages, is

only for the first time beginning to turn his attention to the things that make for his peace. Thus persons, who have never yet been brought to "receive the truth in the love of it," may be yet in very various conditions. Their tempers and natural characters may be extremely various too. One may have (excepting the faith of Christ and the fear and love of God) everything that his best friends could wish, and may have so much of amiable disposition, of generous temper, and of high principle, as to excite the esteem of many; while another perhaps may be as far from all that his fellow-creatures esteem and admire, as he is from what God requires of His creatures in His law.

But however various the conditions of unconverted persons, they all agree in this—that *they are* unconverted, that they have never had the supreme love of God in their hearts, that they have never yielded themselves up to His service, that they have never received the truth of the Gospel "in the love of it," that they have never experienced that new birth, without which our Saviour has said no man can see the kingdom of God. They are yet in their sins, and have no hope while continuing in them, that they shall ever see the face of their Redeemer in peace.

Now, my brethren, I have many awful truths to bring before your notice—many most solemn things, which *I must* say to you. But previous to bringing them before your view, I desire to leave upon your minds the fixed conviction, that there is a complete salvation provided for each one who will believe in Christ. I may have to show you the amount of your sins; but there is no amount of sin, which can hinder the acceptance, the pardon and the eternal happiness of a penitent sinner. I may have to show you the hopelessness of your condition while far from Christ; but the grace of God is almighty to strengthen your weakness and to change your hearts. I may have to unfold to you something of what God has declared concerning the punishment certainly coming on the ungodly; but all that punishment may be averted from

each. I may have to tell you that God has an uncompromising hatred of iniquity; but then all that iniquity may be forgiven, and all that hatred changed into complacent regard, if only you are brought to believe in Christ. And therefore I have to bring before you first this day the blessed truths contained in this verse, upon which already not long since I addressed you; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

I desire that the truths contained in these words may be present to your minds, during all that I shall have afterwards to say—that while you are convinced (if God shall bless what I have to say to you) that sin is a far more evil thing than you have been accustomed to consider it, and your own case perhaps more evil and more dangerous than you have ever believed, still you may know that all which is severe and awful in God's Word has been revealed by Him, and is declared to us, solely with a view, not to inflict unnecessary and useless pain, but to awaken you to those resolves and to those efforts, through which you may be eternally blest—that you, my dear hearers, as many of you as are not religious, may escape from the doom of the ungodly, and be numbered amongst those who are the saved and sanctified people of God.

The first thing these words evidently bring before us is, that a person who is not in Christ is now condemned. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." There is therefore condemnation to those who are not "in Christ Jesus."

I shall not dwell upon this point now, but it is evidently implied in our text—that all persons that are unconverted, for the corruption of their heart and the disobedience of their lives, for their pride and opposition to the will of God, for their neglect of the duties He has assigned them and of the "great salvation" He has provided for them, for their fixed opposition to His will and their constant disregard of His Word, are now in a state of condemnation; that is,

they are now under His anger, and exposed to all those just inflictions which that anger must secure when the hour of judgment comes.

But, in the next place, this passage informs us, that that condemnation is wholly passed away from one, who is "in Christ Jesus," so that if the unconverted sinner does become a disciple of Christ, the condemnation, under which he lived during the whole of his unregenerate life, has at once passed away. "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

There is none. It is no partial forgiveness, that God bestows upon the disciples of Christ; but they are forgiven entirely; "there is no condemnation." Their Redeemer, who has taken them under His care, has made a complete atonement for their sins. If they merit nothing, He merits all for them; if they only deserve to be abandoned by their Creator, He deserves that they should be adopted into his family and welcomed for ever. For He has paid the penalty; He has suffered what they would have suffered; He has glorified God, more than they have dishonoured Him; and so far from being dishonoured in forgiving a disciple of Christ for Christ's sake, God is in every way more glorified by such a process, than He is even in the condemnation of the ungodly. Christ, who has thus atoned, is now exalted at God's right hand for this very purpose, that He might save. This is the great end He has had in view in having carried our human nature glorified into the presence of God; and if He is now exalted to be Head over all things, it is to secure the everlasting welfare of His people. He is "Head over all things to the church;" He has entered heaven as the forerunner of His people, to prepare for them a place there. "There is therefore no condemnation to His disciples. He has undertaken to save them, and He will accomplish their salvation. They still deserve what they ever deserved—to have the anger of their Maker; but Christ Jesus, having brought them into inseparable union with himself, having made them His people, having taken them under His care, has now se-

cured (for His sake and not for theirs) their eternal well being. So that "there is no condemnation."

The forgiveness that He secures for His people is a free forgiveness. They are forgiven "for His sake," and therefore forgiven without any demand being made on them. This the apostle declares, as in many places, so in this epistle to the Romans, the third chapter; "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." "Justified freely." Each pardoned sinner can allege no reason, derived from his past or present conduct, from his past or present tempers of mind, why the Almighty should pass by his sins; but for "Christ's sake" he is forgiven "freely." He can allege no reason why he should be forgiven, derived from his own character. But he need allege none. It is reason enough, that he is a disciple of Christ and that Christ has undertaken to save him.

He who is a disciple of Christ is forgiven fully as well as freely. For the Word of God is—"By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." Because they become His disciples and can avail themselves of the plea of His perfect righteousness, therefore may ALL their sins be forgiven. Since the plea which they use is this, that Christ has made a complete atonement and that He mediates on their behalf, the reason for their justification is a complete one. It leaves nothing to be yet forgiven, nothing to be still atoned for. Christ has accomplished all; and therefore the sinner, who is brought to be a believer in Him, is justified fully no less than freely.

He is pardoned instantly; because it is a pardon solely granted for the sake of Christ, and that reason for his forgiveness is in force the moment he becomes His disciple. Its influence is suspended on nothing besides. There can in the nature of the case be no delay; and if the sinner is justified freely and fully for the sake of the Saviour, he must be justified at once. De-

pendent on no improvement in him, dependent on no merits of his own, on no righteousness which he has to work out, but dependent alone upon the finished work of Christ, there is as much reason that he should be forgiven the moment he becomes Christ's disciple and Christ becomes his Saviour, as there could be if he should live through a thousand years of devoted obedience to God.

As he is justified fully, freely, and instantly, so each disciple of Christ is justified for ever. For this atoning sacrifice which he pleads, and this righteousness of which he is permitted to avail himself, extends to all possible transgression, reaches through all time, secures his welfare through all eternity. For "whom he called, them He also justified; and whom He justified them He also glorified."

Let those then, who are still ungodly, consider seriously within the reach of what a salvation they are placed—how full and complete, how glorious and Divine, the salvation which is offered to them individually. They need not be concerned about the dishonour, which it may be supposed that the pardon of such sinners may do to the perfections of God. He who has revealed this method of salvation, will, as we may well be assured, secure His own glory. Nay more; examine it in whatever light we may, it brings us invariably to this conclusion—that of all conceivable methods, in which the pardon of a sinner may be sought, it is the only one that secures all necessary ends. It is the only one, which, while it meets the wants of a ruined sinner, does in every respect glorify the Creator who has provided it. It is not in wisdom, but in ignorance alone, that any one can accuse this Divine and revealed method of salvation of making no provision for the progressive holiness, for the vigilant obedience of the creature, for all the honour that must be paid to the Divine law and to the Divine government. God has revealed it, then, not as *one method* in which a sinner may be brought to salvation, but as *the only method*. There is no other way by which any person in this assembly can

be forgiven and accepted of God, but this—that he is in "Christ Jesus." Out of Christ, separated from Christ, all efforts are vain, as I shall have more fully to show—all pleas useless, as I must afterwards demonstrate. But if you come to Christ and are "in him," all your sins past are at once and for ever forgiven; the whole which now may harass, or ought to harass you—the whole of that guilt, which is enough to sink you into an abyss from which there is no escape and in which there is no redemption—is done away for ever; and words cannot express that change, unnoticed and silent, which takes place in the condition of an unpardoned and unrenewed transgressor in the hour that he becomes a disciple of Christ.

But that we may make no mistake as to who they are, that are Christ's disciples, let us notice that third point, to which our text draws our attention. Who are they from whom this condemnation has been removed?

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." All others must be condemned; the condemnation is removed from those who are in Christ. What is it then to be in Christ? Who are they, that may without presumption believe it of themselves, that they are in Christ, and therefore that their sins shall no longer condemn and ruin them?

To be "in Christ" is to be closely united to Him, and brought into the relation of a disciple to Christ. It is to be in Him, as that one preserved family was in the ark—to have Him for our shelter from the overwhelming wrath of God. It is to be in Him, as the bough is in the stem of the vine, deriving from it all its life and nutriment; it is so to derive day by day from Christ spiritual life and strength. It is, then, to have His Spirit dwelling in our hearts; it is to be brought to believe on Him, as the only Saviour of our souls; it is to be led to believe that we have no possible deliverance but in Christ—that we deserve to be ruined, and are ruined in fact, without Him—that He is a deliverer for our souls. It

is to believe in Him, in opposition to all other trust—to trust nothing but Christ—to renounce all other hopes from our inmost hearts—honestly, fully and eternally, to give up every other prospect of being saved but that which is given to us in Him. It is to believe in Him, so as not to distrust Him—to believe that He is both able and willing to save, and so to commit our souls to His care for eternity. It is to believe that He will save us in His own way, and in no other—to receive His method of salvation, and to invent none of our own. It is to look for a salvation from the power of sin, no less than from its guilt, and to yield ourselves to His dominion, no less than to His protecting care. This it is, to be “in Christ Jesus.” It is by the power of the Spirit of God to be led to a living, real, genuine faith; such as compels us to love Him, and, loving Him, habitually to serve Him. They who have, by the power of Divine grace, been brought to this real faith in Christ Jesus, are those who are “in Christ;” and they shall “never come into condemnation,” but are “passed from death unto life.”

But since so many are disposed to believe that they are real disciples of Christ—since the penalty of being excluded from “His body, the church,” is so great, that no one is willing to be shut out, and no one willingly acknowledges that he is no member of Christ, no child of God, no heir of heaven, no disciple, no believer—let us direct our attention, in the last place, to that proof of being in Christ which the apostle has brought before our view in these words. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

All who believe in Christ believe in Him through the effectual working of the Holy Ghost. Faith, no less than every subsequent gracious operation is ascribed to Him. It is said to be “the fruit of the Spirit.” It is “the gift of God” to His people. And therefore in all true believers the Spirit of God dwells. He it is, who has wrought in them that great change. He it is, who (according to our Saviour’s words) has “drawn

them” to believe in Him. And therefore, wherever there is true discipleship, there the Spirit of God dwells and reigns. Now He does not dwell in a sinner’s heart to leave him to his own independence of will, his own pride, his own passion; but He dwells there to govern him thenceforth, to put a prevailing principle in the place of that which once prevailed, a new principle—to make him supremely love God, instead of being habitually alienated from Him. And in consequence of this, every one, who is “in Christ Jesus,” is (as the apostle states in the second epistle to the Corinthians) “a new creature;” “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” The Holy Spirit, thenceforth, dwelling there, has given him new views, new aims, new hopes—has set his affections on new objects—has furnished him with new principles, a principle of new life. He is another man. And the Holy Spirit having effected this great change, from that time he “walks”, (that is, he acts day by day, in the habit of his life he acts) “not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” This is the essential mark of belonging to Christ. For if a man lives according to his own will, and not according to the declared will of God, he is proved by that habitual disobedience not to be under the governing influence of the Spirit of God, never to have received the gift of faith, and to be no disciple of Christ.

It is also an infallible, as it is an essential mark of discipleship. For if a man does live “after the Spirit” and not “after the flesh,” he has attained a triumph over self, to which an ungodly man never attained. By whatever discrepancies of opinion or differences of character irreligious and unconverted persons may be marked, they all agree in this—that they “fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” rather than fulfil the will of God. There cannot be pointed out one, who has not been changed by grace and brought to believe in Christ to the salvation of his soul, of whom it can be said that habitually he prefers the will of God to his own will. On the contrary, all, whether they embrace lower or higher views, whether their lives

are honourable or discreditable, whether the world points at them as acting disgracefully or whether they secure the esteem of mankind by honourable, upright and amiable conduct—in all cases they are marked by this, that they follow the will of the flesh rather than the will of God, that they “fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind,” and doing so are still the “children of wrath” and not the children of God.

Hence, brethren, there is no room left for self-deception, to those who are not willing to be deceived. If you wish to know if you belong to Christ or not, you need not fancy you are amongst His people while indeed you are amongst His enemies. The test is exceedingly explicit; the proofs are very evident, if you will look for them; and if you are still in your sins, unchanged in heart, with a prevailing principle of ungodliness, and therefore have no solid hopes for eternity, you may discover that ruined state. You may, if you are honest, find out your danger. You need not go into the eternal world deceived, only to have that delusion finally dissolved when it is too late.

In looking at this statement of our text, as preparatory to those solemn truths with respect to the condition of an ungodly person, which I have afterwards to bring before you, there are only two things, in conclusion, which I desire to leave upon your minds respecting this statement.

The first is, my brethren, that there is no possible salvation for you, except you are saved in this manner, and that this salvation is nigh at hand—that God has provided this redemption and this recovery for *you*. And therefore I would exhort you, at once to seek an interest in this great salvation. Whatever may be your varying conditions, let me beseech you to ask God most earnestly, that this may be the occasion, in which your hearts are brought to Him for ever. Ask Him to undeceive you, if you have been deluded—to destroy your self-righteousness—to overcome the alienation of your hearts. And since there is so great a salvation offered to the old and young

without any reference to the guilty past, in which, passing by all your transgressions, the Almighty is ready to receive you as you are, do not any longer neglect that great salvation, but seek it at His hands.

And the only other remark I would leave with you is, that you let the thought of this great salvation mingle with all those other statements, which I shall have to make; and if they seem severe, if they sometimes appear awful, if they may ever be calculated to dishearten any, let me beg you to remember what I have now brought before your view from the word of God. Let me remind you, that if you are not saved, it will be, not because your sins are great, not because your corruption is complete, not because your hearts have been obdurate, not because God must punish sin, not because He has an uncompromising hatred of it—not for these or similar things only—but because you will not believe in Christ to the salvation of your souls; because, though all these things be true (awfully, fearfully true), though the amount of guilt be probably far greater than any irreligious person in this assembly has ever fancied his guilt to be, yet still there is a salvation provided, which you may become possessed of at once, and in virtue of which all the guilty past shall be forgotten, all your sins shall be removed, and you be brought at once into the condition of God's faithful people. Faith in Christ Jesus will at once place you on the Rock of ages—a true and genuine belief in Him at once entitle you to all the privileges of God's children. You may be as happy as the providence and grace of God can make you on earth from this day, you may be as happy as angels and glorified spirits in eternity, only by believing in Christ.

And therefore, let me, finally, ask you, often and earnestly (while I shall proceed with a delineation of your condition in other sermons,) to lift up your hearts to God in prayer, that that delineation may bring you to lay hold on this great salvation. Remember, it is the one object I keep in view; remember, it is that one which ought to be present to your own minds. And so far

from being repelled or indignant at any of the statements, which shall be made to you, of your guilt and danger, welcome them all; accept of them as a mercy from God. Try to give your judgment, your conscience, your heart to God, and be brought low in self-abasement, that you may find peace in Christ; for every other present hope is delusive, every other way you choose in life ruinous. By this, and by this only, can you escape everlasting condemnation. And therefore whether you be old or whether you be young, whether you be engrossed in the cares of life or having abundance of its pleasures, still ask of God that you may break through all to have His peace and His blessing. And I ask those who through grace have believed in Christ and have faith in Him, no less than those whom I especially address, to unite in secret prayer to God, and ask Him with much earnestness and with constant perseverance, that those among us, the children in our schools, the children in our families, servants perhaps, that have not yet paid any attention to religion, and rich men as well as poor, old as well as young, may by the constraining energy of the Holy Spirit, who works in men "to will and to do according to the good pleasure of God," be brought to receive this great salvation, which, doubling all the enjoyments of time, leads also to a secure and a glorious immortality.

SERMON II.

THE NEEDFUL CHANGE SET BEFORE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 1, 1839.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”—John iii. 3.

WHATEVER may be the load of guilt which rests upon any conscience and whatever may be the desert of any sinner, however obdurate his heart has been, however profane and ungodly his habits, yet if he is brought by any means to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, in that act of faith he passes from a state of condemnation to a state of peace. For “there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Once brought into that blessed condition, a sinner is pardoned, freely, fully, and for ever. The Lord never imputes to him his iniquities more; and if he ever receives chastening for his sins, it is that paternal discipline by which he is to be prepared for glory, and not the penal infliction of a righteous Avenger.

A free, full, and eternal salvation, then is placed within reach of all—is very near to each sinner, now most hopeless and most depraved. There is a “great salvation,” that has been procured at an infinite cost. And happy would it be for all, if they at once laid hold on that great salvation, and “passed from death unto life,” from condemnation to peace.

But alas! my brethren, great as this offer is, immense as are the blessings involved in the covenant of grace, still there are obstacles in our depraved condition, which it is most hard to overcome; and those who have made the attempt to turn from the way of sin to the service of God, have found how immense (and, except by Divine power, how insuperable) those obstacles are. Men are self-righteous, and cannot humble themselves to accept a salvation, which is derived solely from the merit of another. Men are become “enmity to God,” and cannot receive a salvation, the very essence of which is to be brought supremely to love Him. Men are become obdurate in their self-righteousness

and sin, and cannot endure to be called to that just humiliation and penitence, which become a ruined transgressor and which every recovered sinner experiences. Men are become habitual transgressors, and they cannot part with their sins. Men are incurably earthly in their views and adhesions, and cannot bear a religion, which demands a habitual and prevailing spirituality of mind. And though there is so great a salvation provided for each, given freely, which demands no merit, and which is bestowed that moment that a person believes in Jesus Christ, still do men repel the Gospel, and they “will not come to it that they might have life.” And hence there is a necessity for that great moral change, of which our Lord spoke when he said, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

You will see, in the margin of your Bible, that the word “again” is there translated “from above.” I shall not alter the version, because that translation contains the same idea with that in our common version. It has in it this additional idea—that the change to be wrought must be wrought by a Divine power; but the expression that a man must be “born again,” understood in its full import and compared with other passages, expresses the same thing. It means that a person must undergo a moral change, wrought by the Spirit of God.

The passage, then, points to these three principal considerations; first, the nature of that moral change; secondly, the agent by whom it is accomplished; and thirdly, its necessity. And let me beg you, my dear friends, to weigh these points with immediate personal application, without which we hear the Word of God to little profit; and as we pass from one point to

another, observe what light is thrown upon your own condition, and to what efforts and what thoughts it ought to lead you, personally and at this very time.

I have, in some future sermons, to set before you much that is of a very solemn character; and my object in doing so is to call those among you, that have never yet turned to God, to seek this blessed change. It is therefore well first distinctly to place before you what the change is. It is for this very purpose, that I shall have to bring before you something of the character of sin, and something of its just and threatened penalty and of the danger in which each unrenewed soul is; but those thoughts ought not to be separated from this—What is the step which a sinner ought to take? what is the change which a sinner must experience? what is it to be religious, and to what are careless and ungodly persons called, when they are told the dreadful consequences of remaining in a state of impenitence? Now this passage brings it before your view, when it says, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

I. The expression “to be born again” (or “to be born from above”) implies evidently a vast moral change. It is just like the entering on new life; and expressions are employed in the New Testament, which show how complete the change must be. It is said, for instance, in the second epistle to the Corinthians—“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” It is an entire change in the judgment, the will, and the affections of an ungodly person; so that, with all the change of habits which follow these (an entire change in his judgment of things, in his will, and in his affections—that is, in the objects on which his affections are principally set) it is so great a change, that when he has undergone it he may be properly termed “a new creature,” and, all old feelings and affections having passed away, all things are become new. And this change (the apostle says in the epistle to the Galatians) is so useful

that nothing else avails to mark a Christian, or to constitute a state of safety. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing nor uncircumcision;” it is of very little consequence (apart from this) to what forms a man gives his attention or what he overlooks; whether he be a very regular formalist or whether he be (as he thinks) emancipated from forms, whether he glories in his liberty or in his regularity, neither the one nor the other is of any avail, for in Christ Jesus nothing avails but “a new creature. And this is evidently implied that if a person is “a new creature,” he has attained to new life, which he never before had. It is therefore said in the epistle to the Ephesians—“You hath he quickened,” you hath he brought to new life, “who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Now these expressions at once show what a vast change is accomplished, when a person is “born again” or “born from above.” It is, as I have stated, the imparting of a new principle of spiritual life, the principle of godliness, to a heart that was entirely destitute of it before; through which new affections, new views, and a new state of the will are produced.

The effect of this change is exceedingly striking. There are many passages in the New Testament, which serve to show the principal immediate consequences that flow from it. Some of these let me notice to you.

The first immediate consequence from that great change is, that the person who was self-righteous learns exclusively to trust in the Redeemer. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ” truly (says the apostle) is “born of God.” He that is brought to look upon Jesus as the only Saviour from eternal hell, his only way of deliverance, his only way to the Father and to glory—that person is born of God. To be born of God, leads to that change—leads one simply to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. And till that change passes upon the man, he does not so believe. “No man can come to me,” says the Redeemer. “except the Father which hath sent Me draw him;” and then, “every man that hath

heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me." He who is not "born of God" does not believe in Christ; and he who is "born of God" must believe in Christ; he comes to Christ; he places his whole hope in Christ, and looks to Him as his whole salvation, his only way of escape from deserved wrath and his only means of attaining to undeserved glory.

The next immediate consequence of this great change is, that the person who once was enmity against God now supremely loves Him. "The carnal mind is enmity"—each person, who is not the subject of Divine grace, has a prevailing enmity—to godliness; to all God commands, to His ways, and to the characters of His people, and therefore to God Himself; "the carnal mind is enmity against God." But as soon as a person is born again, that enmity is exchanged for gratitude and supreme delight in God. The apostle says, in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, that the hope of a Christian will not make ashamed, because the love of God or love to God "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Whenever, then, that great change is accomplished, it sheds abroad love to God in the heart. It diffuses throughout the whole soul a supreme love to the Almighty. "The fruit of the Spirit is love;" and every real Christian can say, "We love Him because He first loved us." Having attained to new views respecting redeeming love, and having seen something of the moral glory of the whole way of salvation revealed in the Gospel, a sinner is brought to love that benevolent Being, who has originated and accomplished it.

A third immediate consequence, that flows from this change, is to lead a person that was before obdurate to real penitence. It was predicted in the prophet Ezekiel, that the Lord would (when the Saviour came) bestow upon His church this great blessing; "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." When that promise is accomplished, as it is in the case of every one who is "born

again"—when he receives that new heart and that new spirit and that new life—then the stony heart is taken away and the heart of flesh is bestowed. He who could not feel the evil of sin, he who could not mourn because he had violated the law of God, he who was always disposed to justify himself and to make light of sin, and to think that it was a slight infirmity and that which the Lord could not justly visit with condign, and still less with eternal punishment—he now sees its evil. The extent and spirituality of the law being brought before his view, "that which was ordained to life he finds to be unto death;" and though he was "alive without the law once, when the commandment comes he dies." He sees that he is exposed to eternal condemnation, as the just consequence and penalty of sin. He sees also the ingratitude and moral deformity of those habits, which he once palliated, if he did not justify. His heart of stone is gone. He can feel sin as he ought to feel it; he can understand and feel Divine love, in some measure as he ought; and this makes him mourn. And God has poured out upon him "the spirit of grace and supplications," and he "looks on Him whom he has pierced, and mourns" and is in bitterness for it, and regrets that he has ever spent so much of a profitless and unworthy life in offending and dishonouring Him, whom he ought supremely to have loved and served.

A fourth immediate consequence that flows from this change is, that the person who did habitually and willingly disobey the law of God, is brought habitually to endeavour after complete obedience. This was also promised in the same prophet; "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." You observe that these habits of obedience were to be the result of this new life; "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes." And God had promised the same by His prophet Jeremiah; the same inward work, through which the heart is changed, He had promised should lead them to an affectionate and child-like

obedience; I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." After the coming of Christ and at the time when the Spirit should be poured out, they were to be brought to obey: and they were to be brought to obey in love. Instead of any longer paying a partial, fictitious and reluctant service, they were to be brought to render to the Almighty a willing, uniform, and affectionate obedience, in which they were aiming at least at entire conformity to His will and complete obedience to His law. And this, which was thus promised by the Lord through these two prophets, has been fulfilled since the coming of the Saviour in His church; for God in all His people works by a secret efficacious power "to will and to do"—that is, He makes them inclined to fulfil His will, and that inclination masters every other, so that they actually accomplish that upon which the will is set. They walk, therefore, "in newness of life;" and those who are born of God no longer are under the dominion of sin and Satan. This the apostle St. John assures us of, in his first general epistle. "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning; for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin; because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil." "And hereby" (he therefore says)—"hereby we do know that we know him if we keep His commandments. He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." And that which the Word of God states of believers generally, the observation of those who are under the governing influence of the Gospel proves likewise to be true. Their habits are changed, and they do not allow themselves in known sin. If

they fall, it is through infirmity—against which they resolve, for which they mourn and from which by Divine grace they speedily recover; but the habit, the prevailing habit of each person whose heart is renewed, is to do the will of God in the mortification of every thing that is corrupt in his own will.

And the last immediate consequence of this change which I shall notice, is that they who formerly "minded earthly things," to use the language of the apostle, (that is, set their minds principally on earthly interests and earthly pleasures,) now principally seek the interests of eternity. This the apostle assures us, is the consequence of this renewing of the heart, when he says (in the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans and the fifth verse), "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;" all unrenewed persons "mind the things of the flesh," they have no heart or inclination for spiritual things, spiritual blessings do not seem valuable, religious habits do not please, and they therefore "mind" (chiefly set their heart and mind) upon some earthly attainment or other; "but they that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit." They may pursue, according to their proper worth, all the allowed objects of earth; but they chiefly set their minds on the interests of eternity, on the favour of God, on the recovery of His lost image, on the performance of His will, on the fulfilment of their duty, on the attainment of His promises, and on all those spiritual blessings that do not terminate with the grave, but which go on into eternity.

This is briefly the character of that change which is accomplished when a person is "born again." He who was self-righteous trusts in the Redeemer alone; he who was alienated from God, learns supremely to love Him; he who was obdurate and proud, becomes a humble penitent; he who habitually allowed himself in known transgression, now habitually fulfils the will of God and is endeavouring to obey the whole law with all his powers; and he whose heart was principally set on the things of time, or (in the language of the apostle)

who "sowed to the flesh," now has his affections chiefly set upon spiritual objects or (in the language of the same apostle) "sows to the Spirit."

II. Let us then, in the second place notice the great Agent, by whom this change is accomplished.

The mere notice of those various passages, which I have cited, has already shown who is the Agent, by whom this is accomplished. A man must be "born again;" a man must be "born from above:" and in the language of the fifth verse, he must be "born of water and of the Spirit." Not merely must he be "born of water;" the profession is of itself valueless; it is only when it is in conjunction with this great moral change accomplished by the Spirit, that to "be born of water" is a blessing at all. But he who is "born of water and of the Spirit," who is brought externally to the profession of being a believer in Christ and at the same time is "born of the Spirit"—his heart renovated by the Holy Ghost—that person is a child of God.

The Spirit, then, is the great Agent, by whom it is accomplished. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done" (says the apostle St. Paul in his third chapter to Titus), "but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It is He who thus cleanses the soul from its defilement, and who renews it from its corrupted state. To Him, and to Him alone are ascribed all those particulars in the change, to which I have already referred you. If a man is brought to believe in Christ, it is said, that "the fruit of the Spirit is faith;" "Who then, is Paul" (says the apostle), "and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" If a man, who was once alienated from God, learns supremely to love Him, it is because "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost." If the man, who once was obdurate and proud, now humbly mourns for sin, it is because God the Spirit has "taken away the stony heart and given him a heart of flesh." If a person who lived once in habitual sin, and,

if he did not glory in it, at least trifled in it, is brought now to leave and detest it and to serve God, it is because he is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works;" it is because the Holy Spirit has renewed him to that obedience; he is "led by the Spirit of God," he is "born of God" and therefore "doth not commit sin." And if a person, who was once carnally minded now becomes spiritually minded, it is because he "minds the things of the Spirit" and is "led of the Spirit" to that disposition.

He then alone is the Author of this change. It is not accomplished by mere thought or reading, or the following of good examples, or by mere resolution, or by the sight of the danger which a sinner incurs in his impenitent state, or by the intrinsic efficacy of prayer, and still less by any merit of any reforms or any confessions, to which the man can be brought; but it is the work of the Holy Ghost. Various means may concur; the appointed instrumentality must be employed; but it is not the instrument, which accomplishes it, it is God the Holy Spirit. A man must be "born from above," a man must be "born of the Spirit," if ever he is to "see the kingdom of God."

III. Let us now, in the last place, observe the necessity of this change. Our Lord's language is very explicit; "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Whatever persons may fancy or hope, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

There is no statement, which meets with greater opposition in the world. There is no doctrine which is more obnoxious to the trifling and the proud. And yet the very opposition which it meets only serves the more to convince us of its truth. It is because of that irreclaimable opposition to God, that persons can for an instant question the necessity of this great moral change. The very slightest consideration ought to be enough to convince every one that it must take place, if they are ever to see God. What! is it conceivable that a

man, who is self-righteous, who is alienated from his Maker, who is obdurate and proud, who is living in habitual and allowed sin, and whose heart is set on earthly objects supremely, can ever live with God? Does it not argue the basest views of that Divine Being—does it not argue views altogether unworthy of the Divine glory—to conceive that a person in such a state could ever be admitted into His presence? and could any thing but a total corruption of nature and his being lost to all real godliness ever have made a person imagine for an instant, that unless he was brought to those new moral habits and dispositions of which I have been speaking, he could ever dwell with God in eternal glory? Has the Almighty God in His infinite compassion to sinners sent us a Redeemer, given His own Son to die that we might be everlastingly saved? and is it conceivable, that a man, who lives in habitual contempt of that incomparable mercy, should ever, as the consequence of that work of mercy, come to God in glory? Can ever a man be saved in a way that pours contempt upon the greatest work of Divine compassion, that the universe has ever witnessed, or probably ever will? And if not, then the self-righteous is, by possessing that character, self-condemned; in trusting to any thing but Christ—in trusting to his own righteousness altogether, or in trusting in any measure to that self-righteousness and in the least mingling up his own corrupt performances with the incomparable merit of the Son of God—he is doing a dishonour to the Saviour, and manifesting an opposition of heart to the Gospel, which must in eternity condemn him. And, again, if a man, who has ten thousand reasons why he should supremely love God, can look at all those reasons only to set them at nought, can recal infinite obligation only to manifest unconquerable enmity—if his heart is resolutely opposed to the Divine Being, and he cannot love infinite Goodness, he cannot be subject to the authority of his Creator, he cannot fall down to Him, who, as He is the greatest, is the fairest and best of all beings—he must feel self-condemned, unless that habit is

changed and that disposition gone; for what is becoming, for a creature of God at enmity with his Maker and Benefactor, but everlasting banishment from the presence of God? And if a man has been living carelessly or proudly in sin day by day, disregarding God's laws, never examining His Word, not doing His will—if because He is supported in his views by numbers, by a poor collection of petty helpless beings, that will shortly stand before their Maker not daring to utter one word either in condemnation of His proceedings or in justification of their own, and because he is sustained by the votes and the opinions of that majority on earth, he shall therefore remain proud and obdurate of heart, when he ought to be humbled to the very dust to think how he has been living in rebellion against God—can such a person retain that obduracy with impunity? is it conceivable, that God will admit a triumphant rebel into His presence, and give *him* a crown of glory that never would repent of sin? It is impossible, that such a creature can ever stand with acceptance before his Creator; he must undergo the moral change, by which he is brought to penitence and mourning for sin. Must not (again,) the slightest reflection convince any one, that if there be a moral Governor, if the Almighty is supreme in His own universe and does govern His own creation, He never can, He never will, He never ought to let any one live in allowed opposition of heart and habit to His will and to His laws, and that there is in that opposition (considering our inferiority and obligations) a nameless corruption and guilt, which it is truly awful to contemplate? so that he who cherishes these habits notwithstanding, and is governed by the maxims of the world or by his own fancy instead of being governed by the law of God, must in those habits be self-condemned, and, unless he be reclaimed from them, he must perish. And when God has placed us in this world only to be travellers, has set us in it only as the first stage of our existence, has made us immortal creatures to be here for just half a century or a little more in order to prepare for that eternal

state to which we are then to pass—and if a person shall spend the whole of that time, occupy his faculties, his powers, his influence, his wealth, his leisure, his feelings, his whole being, only in frivolity and sin, setting his heart on the things which are to pass with the day, while he turns away from all that is great and all that is worthy, disregarding the favour of his Maker to seek the favour of a man, disregarding his eternal state only to seek a little more enjoyment in his temporal—there is in this a corruption incapacitating him for eternal glory, and he must feel that he who sows must reap as he sows, and that if he “reaps corruption” it is but that for which (and for which alone) he is prepared. And thus the slightest consideration must convince any one, that he “*must be born again,*” and that all these corrupt affections must be removed and the new principles of which I have spoken must be imparted, if he is ever to stand before his Maker.

Any one may be guided to the same conclusion, if he will think of the Agent of that change. If it be wrought by the Holy Spirit, then must it be necessary. For if a man “have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;” if he is a child of God, he is “led of the Spirit of God;” and the Holy Spirit must certainly lead those, over whom He reigns, to seek those things which He himself approves. He must implant in them an entire confidence in Christ, and a supreme love to God, and deep humiliation for sin; He must glorify that Saviour, to honour whom He has come forth; He must bring them to an obedience to the law of God, and a settled desire after heavenly things. And on these and similar grounds, which I cannot now proceed to set before you, it is evident that if the change is one wrought by the Holy Spirit, it is necessary that a person should be brought to all these new habits and dispositions if ever he is to be with God.

But, my brethren, all reasoning on the subject is rendered perfectly superfluous by the explicit character of our Lord’s language. He has said to you and me, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again,

he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Men may now choose to defy the threatenings of their Maker, may trifle with His invitations, may contrive to introduce doubt and uncertainty where all is plain, and for a little while they may abuse their own minds and do mischief to others by those contrivances; but Christ’s words are so explicit, that when they come to stand before Him in judgment, they will have no excuse left. He said, “I say unto you, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God”—“Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God;” and therefore away with all those delusions, away with all those inventions of men, which would go to show that the change is not necessary. My brethren, *it must be accomplished; it must be accomplished in each man, who ever shall reach heaven; and there are none but those who experience it, that ever will see the face of God in peace.* If Christ be true, if this be the Word of God, if we are rational and accountable creatures and shall stand in the presence of our Maker, this will prove true. Men may, if they please, now doubt and now despise; but, as the Lord once said to a company of miserable fugitives, who refused to obey His will and chose to go down into Egypt when He bade them go into Assyria, while He declared that He would destroy them for that disobedience, “They shall know” (He adds) “whose word shall stand, theirs or Mine.” God will show to sinners “whose word shall stand.” Though they may oppose this doctrine, alas! it will be to their own undoing, because “heaven and earth shall pass away, but His Word shall not pass,” nor “one tittle” of it. They shall stand before that glorious Monarch, who once came down to this earth in such a lowly form, veiling His Divine majesty in meekness and in mercy; they shall stand before that glorious Monarch, and they will be without excuse when He recalls to them this word, and declares, “I told you that “except a man were born again, he could not see the kingdom of God”—and demands of us, ‘Why did you doubt? why did you delay, why did

you refuse, to seek to experience that great change, which would at length leave upon your minds no doubt either as to its reality or its necessity?"

And this, my brethren, is indeed the point, to which I desire to bring all that part of this congregation, who have never experienced this change.

I would first beseech you to make it a practical question, for your own welfare. I beseech you not to allow yourselves to be misled by any delusive statements as to the character of that change. Do not, my dear friends, imagine that any formality can amount to that change, or that anything can exempt you from the necessity of that great moral renewal of your nature, which the Holy Spirit of God alone can cause. *That*—and nothing short of it—you must seek. Do not set your minds on any less change, but on this—that you may simply depend on Christ, that you may supremely love God, that you may feel a deep contrition for sin, that you may be led heartily and habitually to renounce all known iniquity, and that you may "set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Let me beseech you not to be deceived as to the necessity of this change. *It must* pass on you. Do not speak of it as a Christian doctrine to be maintained, but as a fact to be experienced, as a duty to be accomplished. *You* have to be "born again;" *you* have to experience the whole of that change in aim and heart and will, by which you may become true disciples of Jesus Christ and be prepared for heaven. Do not then think of this subject in any other way, than as resolving at once to seek that *you* may experience the change, upon which you are speculating or reflecting.

Let me further entreat you, never to forget that it is accomplished only by God. When you are thinking, my dear friends, of the necessity of your being changed, that you may be brought to experience all these Christian dispositions and form these right habits, then recollect that if ever you are to be successful in your efforts it must be by Divine grace. Various efforts you must

make, various means you must employ; they are appointed of God, they are essential to your success; but they are wholly impotent, except as God also employs them. He has told you, that you "must be born of the Spirit;" and if you are seeking that change in any other way, you are acting presumptuously; you are offending Him, whose blessing you ought humbly to seek, and you can only look for disappointment, and eventually despair.

My brethren, only think of those great blessings, which the Gospel of Christ brings to us. What would it be if you could say this day that you were saved by the grace of God, that you were rescued from the power and penalty of sin, made the children of God and heirs of heaven, numbered amongst His believing people, your sins pardoned and your souls accepted! What a change would have passed on the whole character of your lives and of your destiny! Into what great blessings would you have been introduced! And it is this great change, by which these mercies must be made yours. I ask you here to pause. I ask you to go from this house of prayer, with a resolution that you will seek them. Ask God to accomplish this great change; and wait on Him continually in prayer till it is accomplished, and till you have every symptom and sign laid down in God's Word that you have found the Lord.

But I trust there are many in this congregation, who have already experienced it, and who have themselves entered into the kingdom of grace on earth and are preparing for the kingdom of glory above. Because God the Spirit has wrought in them that great and necessary change, they can say they do trust in Christ, they do supremely love their Maker, they are sorry for the past, they are living in habitual obedience to His will, and they desire their spiritual and eternal interests more than those which are temporal. Blessed be God, if in the midst of this evil world He has gathered to Himself a people, however small. Blessed be God, if He has looked upon those who were lost, and has come and saved them. But if, my brethren, He has done this

for you, then recal it with renewed gratitude. Feel in yourselves, that there is no return you can make, which can be adequate to express what you owe to God. When you come to the table of the Lord this day, may it be to resolve to devote to Him all your lives, to serve Him with all your powers and passions. And then pass the sympathising thought to those of your friends and neighbours in this congregation, who have never been led to give their hearts up to Him, and, who (as far as you can see) are in danger of eternal death. Bear them on your hearts before God. Unite, I beseech you—unite in fervent prayer, that God would meet those in this congregation, who have hitherto been careless. It is but a little while, that they will have to listen to the Gospel. It is true, when one minister is laid in the grave, another is raised up, and so the Gospel is preached among us from generation to generation; but where are those, who listened to that Gospel from the ministers of the last generation? They are gone to their great change too. And it is but a little time, that any in this congregation will have to hear the invitations of mercy. May God meet them before the day is past, before the night closes upon them in everlasting darkness, before they have sinned away all hope, and only meet His justice instead of experiencing His mercy!

THE EXTENT OF THEIR SINFULNESS SET BEFORE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 8, 1839.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—Rom. iii 23.

THERE are many reasons, my brethren, which concur in hindering persons naturally from taking a just view of their sinfulness—reasons which must always be borne in mind by a person, who wishes to make a just estimate of his state, because otherwise he will think that the conclusions to which he comes are fair and honest when perhaps they are the result of most manifest prejudice. In the first place, many persons are to a very great extent ignorant of the requirements of God's law; although they live in a country where the Bible is circulated, where expositions of the Bible abound, and where the gospel is widely preached, still (having no desire to become acquainted with obnoxious truths, truths which threaten to end much of their guilty enjoyment) they do not wish to know the doctrines or precepts of the Gospel, and do (as a matter of fact) continue to live to a great extent ignorant both of the law and of the Gospel. Hence they obviously cannot judge aright of their sinfulness, which must be determined by the extent of their violations of the law. Our natural corruption is a great impediment also to a right discernment of our sinfulness—because no unholy person can judge properly of holiness; no person who is accustomed to do evil is disposed to think it as evil as it really is. We know this; it is one of the most ordinary features of human nature, with which every one is acquainted; and as we are greatly depraved, therefore we are constantly disposed to judge of sinful actions erroneously. To this we must add that we have fallen into a corrupt state, in which pride and self-complacency predominate; and both these dispositions make us unwilling to see the whole extent of our sinfulness. No person is free from these evils; we are all inclined to feel proud and self-complacent, and therefore (under the

influence of these feelings) to judge far too favourably of our dispositions and conduct. Self-interest must be added, as another obstacle greatly opposing those who wish to form a right view of their sins. Those persons, who are living in the transgression of God's laws, are by those laws condemned; and if they come to a full conviction of the real amount of their guilt, they must see that they are in a state of imminent danger and that they are exposed to an awful end; and persons are very unwilling to discover painful truth, or to know that which threatens them with unhappiness—unless at the same time it points out the way by which they may escape it. But *this*, on the other hand, is not done to those, whose hearts are devoted to sin; for the love of sin mingles with that fear of punishment, in hindering them from forming a right estimate of their transgressions. If a person is enabled by grace to leave sin, being then pardoned, it threatens him no more; but as long as a person remains impenitent, so long he is exposed to the just anger of God; and those who are impenitent, who mean to continue in sin, are therefore extremely unwilling to detect the amount of sinfulness in their habits, because it threatens to deprive them of their wonted enjoyments, to change all their favourite habits, and till they are brought to consent to that change they cannot willingly open their eyes to the extent of their sin. I may also add, that the fear of man is a great hindrance to a person who has his attention called to the extent of his sins—because those views, which the Gospel gives, of human depravity and human guilt, are extremely displeasing to the world, and the world will do all they can (by false reasoning or by ridicule) to explode those views, and a person who entertains them must expect to meet alter-

nately with ridicule and argument; those therefore that are not constrained by some very powerful moral cause, are unwilling to meet this ridicule, and would far rather persuade themselves that their habits and the habits of others living like them are not so guilty as they are said in the Word of God to be. And then if by any means a person has formed light views of sin, and thinks his sins (and terms them perhaps) infirmities, pardonable qualities, or by any other softer names which men have invented to deceive themselves in this matter, then he is very much confirmed in these [views of the little extent of his sinfulness by perceiving that they are common in the world, that almost all whom he meets share in those views, and that many whom he can name as wise and prudent and prosperous and looked up to by their fellow-creatures, and to a certain extent virtuous too, exactly accord in his views, and would oppose those that are derived from the Scripture.

Now, my brethren, you all share in these feelings; all of us have them naturally; and these obstacles are in the way of all, and naturally prevent all from forming a right estimate of their state. Some (I trust numbers here) have by the goodness of God been enabled to overcome these obstacles, and at least in a measure have attained to a right view of their sins. Being led to confess and renounce them and seek for pardon through Christ, they have been brought into the condition of believers—brought to that capacity which all believers have, to look at the whole amount of their guilt without fear. They are humbled now by the view of sin, but not alarmed, because, having been led to believe in Christ, they are forgiven, and, being numbered amongst His children, their sins are not imputed to them. But all the rest, all the rest in this assembly, all those who have not been brought to a thorough confession of sin and an entire renunciation of it, and have not committed themselves to the eternal care of God and given themselves to His service for ever—all such persons have still these obstacles in their way,

and are not disposed to entertain just views of the extent of their sins and their criminality.

Now, my dear brethren, I earnestly wish, for your own welfare, to bring you to see your sins in their just light. And let me, as a preliminary, ask you to endeavour to obtain candour of mind, and an earnest desire to view your conduct impartially. I do not wish to bring you to any extravagant estimate of their guilt, but only to call your minds into healthful and sincere exercise and to bring you to form (as much as you can) an unbiassed judgment respecting the extent and the guilt of your transgressions.

This passage leads us to examine both the extent of our sins and their guilt. It tells us that "all men have sinned," and then it assures us that because of their sins all men "come short of the glory of God"—that is, fail of obtaining the glory of God, cannot reach His glory, must be excluded from all participation in the Divine glory when they come to die. The first of these two expressions leads us to consider the number and variety of your sins; the second leads us to consider their criminality. But I can at the present time only call your attention to the former point—the extent and variety, the number and variety of the sins of those who are still unregenerate.

May you, my dear hearers, be enabled to judge yourselves, that you be not judged of the Lord. Anticipate the final account you have to give. Anticipate that judgment, which the Lord will in a few years pronounce upon you. Try to place yourselves as before your heart-searching Judge. And while we look at the number and variety of your sins on the present occasion, if your consciences respond to those statements, do not rebel them, but let them dwell upon your minds throughout the remainder of this day.

I. To understand and perceive the number and the variety of our sins, their extent and greatness, we ought, in the first place, to consider the amount of our obligations to a contrary course. Let us, therefore, first observe, how far each of us is bound to serve God.

To judge of this, reflect, my brethren, what God is, and what God has done for you. Think of those two points, that you may measure your obligations. Reflect that as God is revealed in His Word, and proved by His works, to be almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent, eternal and unchangeable, so also is He shown in His works and in His Word to be the most holy, just and true — the most compassionate, tender, good, kind, faithful and forbearing—the most forgiving and the most loving of all beings. Remember, you have innumerable proofs of this, derived from His works in nature as well as from the work of grace ; and that in all these perfections He is infinite—that is, He has them to an extent passing all knowledge and all thought of ours. Think also of what God in the exercise of these perfections has done for you. He is your Creator, Benefactor, Preserver, and Redeemer. Brief words ; but what a world of mercies they involve ! He has provided for your wants ; He has watched over you day by day, continued to you your existence, given you many hours of happiness, and shown you how you may be happy for ever. He has pointed out to you the way to glory ; He has given you the revelation of His will, provided for you a Saviour, told you that you may be forgiven all your transgressions, and shown you a glorious inheritance and home in the heavens, in which you may have an eternity of joy.

Now for all this, what (let me ask you) does the Almighty deserve at your hands ? What does this great and gracious Being demand ?

1. He has said to you and to me, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind and strength." Does He ask too much ? Let me beg each person here to answer this question to himself, and with reference to himself. The Lord demands this from you all ; can any one here say that he asks too much ? Ought He not to be thus supremely and perfectly loved ? When you think of all that He is and all that he has done, who ought to be loved as He ? He has given you the capacity of affection ; for what was it given ?

Was it to be supremely set on that which had inferior excellence, or on that which had the highest ? Do not you feel that you ought to love Him perfectly, that you ought to love Him as much as your nature is capable of loving, and that in all that He is and all that He has done there are reasons enough why you should thus love Him perfect ?

2. Besides loving Him and (manifesting that love in loving all that He loves—His Word, His people, His day, the throne of grace where you meet Him and look forward to being with Him, for ever) —besides this, His glorious attributes demand that we should all supremely fear God. Surely nothing ought to be dreaded so much as His displeasure. Surely the enmity of our fellow-creatures is not for a moment to be put into comparison with the anger of a Being, who is almighty, eternal and unchangeable ; and on all those occasions, in which a course of conduct insures that we should receive some measure of disapprobation either from God on the one hand or from men on the other, which ought to be preferred ? Surely *He* ought most to be feared.

3. He too is worthy to be most believed —more so than all creatures. For His Word is the result of omniscience and of perfect truth. Every word will be accomplished ; every thing that He has said is simply and unalterably true. Ought He not to be fully credited ? Every truth that He declares ought to be received with implicit credit, every promise He makes fully confided in.

4. And then a Being like this ought to be entirely trusted—far more than we can trust the most powerful and the most faithful of our fellow-creatures. Those who have the opportunity of knowing Him should be able to confide to Him all their cares and all their interests, trust Him with their whole happiness, fully believe that He will accomplish all His promises, commit themselves (in answer to His invitation) to His eternal care, and yield themselves up to be for ever happy in being for ever under that care.

5. Those who have the opportunity of knowing a Being like this ought surely constantly to serve and glorify Him. If He has loaded you with His favours, it is that you may employ them to promote His glory. When His Word commands us thus—"Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," we feel that it is reasonable. When that Word says, "Glorify God with your bodies and spirits, which are His," we can neither quarrel with the premises nor with the inference. All must be His, by whom they were made, by whom they are sustained, and by whom the sources of so much happiness have been opened to them. If then we could live perpetually to honour God, doing the things which are calculated to give Him glory, intending (while doing them) that as our highest end, and having an intense unintermitting wish to give Him glory in all that we do, it would be but the simple just return for all that He has done to us.

6. And with these dispositions to the Almighty, we clearly are called to obey Him in all His commands. His laws are "holy, just and good." There is not one with which a creature can reasonably find fault, not one which could be withdrawn without doing us mischief. Every single command is calculated to further our happiness and excellence. And *He* has commanded them, who is the sovereign Lawgiver and the righteous Judge. We are bound to obey Him. Whatever those commands may be, with reference to Himself or to our fellow-creatures or to our own personal character we are bound to give them a perfect obedience, to obey them at all times, to obey them with all our powers—heartily, promptly, unreservedly, cheerfully to obey them all. Hence we feel that it is "our reasonable service" and the least we can offer to God, that we should be *His*. He is the great Proprietor, and we His property. We are bound thus to serve Him with all our powers and faculties both of body and of soul, in all places and among all persons, at all times and through the whole of life. We are conse-

crated beings; bound unalterably, unchangeably bound—thus to devote ourselves to the service of God.

Now before I proceed further, let me ask you, my dear friends—let me ask those who have not lived a godly life, those who have reason to think that as yet the love of God has never reigned in their hearts, who have never been brought savingly to believe in Jesus Christ, who do not know that they are converted, who suspect that they are not—whether you be young or old, whether you be rich or poor, let me ask the children of this congregation, let me ask the young persons, let me ask all that have reached mature life, let me ask all (whatever their habits) who have reason to suppose that they are not converted to God—let me ask them whether they can reasonably object to this brief and very imperfect statement of their obligations to God. I ask them, whether mercies innumerable, bestowed by a Being who is infinitely good, do not demand, as the least return they can make, that they should serve Him with all their powers, with all their affections, through every day and every hour of their being. And they must, if they answer truly, if they are honest, if they have any measure of common candour—they must answer, 'Yes, it is just that God should be thus served.'

II. But, in the next place, let us turn from our obligations to our actual conduct. Let us observe how we have served that Being, whom we were thus bound to serve. And if the review is calculated especially to bring those that are yet ungodly to a conviction of their sinfulness, it is calculated also to awaken in those that are true believers much lively gratitude to God that He has rescued them, and much fervent desire that those who are in the midst of them (perhaps closely associated with them, travelling with them to the unseen world and hastening to the judgment of eternity,) should also be partakers of that great salvation.

Our text says, that "all have sinned;" and I now have to entreat the earnest at-

tion of my unconverted hearers to the number and the extent of their sins. You have acknowledged, I trust, in secret, that you were obliged supremely to love, to fear, to believe in, to trust, to glorify, to serve and to obey the Almighty God; let me now ask you solemnly to consider how far you have done so.

1. Instead of loving Him with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, have you not—do you not know that you have been indifferent to God all your days; Do you not know you have been alienated from God? Have you not disliked His Word, His ways, His people, His day, His laws, His Gospel? Have you not disliked the whole of revelation, as far as it bore upon your character and restrained your own wishes? and in disliking this, which is the transcript and result of the Divine perfections, have you not been opposed in heart and nature, as well as in habits, to the perfections of God—opposed to Him? and if that opposition had only been brought out, if you had been brought into circumstances suited and calculated to call it forth, would it not very soon have dilated into avowed enmity to the best of Beings?

Now, my brethren, there is not a charge more awful, there is not one more alarming, that can be brought against the sinner. It is not, I confess, to be made light of; and at first your own nature resents the charge, and you revolt against it as untrue—that you have hated God. But, first, let me ask you to consider whether God's Word does not charge you with it. Our Lord, when He was upon earth, charged all those that were around Him, who were not believers in Him, as having this enmity to Him. "The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth; because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." Again He says—"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." But this was the living Saviour, living among them, and by His holy example and by His severe doctrine condemning their sins, and therefore provoking enmity; was this to hate God? He added, "He that hateth Me hateth My Father also;" because He only manifested

the perfections of God, His whole work was an illustration of what God is, His whole character in exact conformity to that of the Father, and he who hated the character, the doctrine, the work of Jesus, could be shown by strict and simple reasoning (if he ever allowed himself to reason) to hate all the same things in God—that is, he would see, that if the Divine attributes were brought out to his view and he was compelled to acknowledge them, he must in hating Christ hate the Father too. All those then, who still hate the Gospel, who hate that way of salvation which God has provided (and alas! there are not a few who would be startled at the thought that they hate the Creator, who yet acknowledge this hatred of the Gospel)—all these are charged by the Word of God with hating their Maker as they hate their Redeemer. Let us recollect, that the world around us of professed Christians is animated by just the same principles as the world that surrounded Jesus, who were professedly servants of God. They gloried in their religion, and in some respects had more religion than the mass of society now; and if they hated Christ, there is no reason to suppose that the world, animated now by the same principles and having originally the same nature, does not hate Him too. Yet He said then "He that hateth Me hateth My Father also." Hence then, whoever is conformed to the world is brought under this charge. "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." That person, who loves the world's dissipated amusements, who shares in the world's prevailing maxims and conduct, who has the spirit that prevails in the world and is no better nor worse than the mass of his fellow-creatures, is here declared to be an "enemy of God." And if that does not bring conviction to your minds who have been friends of the world, that you are His enemies, because you resent a charge which is so fearful in its consequences, let me ask you, my dear friends, to consider again what the word of God charges you with—

"The carnal mind is enmity against God." And what is the proof, that the unrenewed mind is "enmity against God?" It is that "it is not subject to His law." Habitual disobedience, wilful disregard of the Divine will, is here, on the authority of the Almighty himself, declared to be the proof of enmity against Him; and those of you, therefore, who have been living in allowed sin, who have been knowingly disregarding the will of God from your childhood upwards, who have never set yourselves to do the will of God throughout, are by this Word of God charged with being His "enemies." "Alienated and enemies in your minds by wicked works;" the works proving your enmity, in the first place, and confirming it in the next. These are the statements that God has made respecting the condition of those, who are the "friends of the world" and who are living in allowed transgression.

Now if this charge is very severe—if it is a conclusion, which you scarcely know how to avoid, but yet you have an insurmountable repugnance to acknowledge that you, my unconverted hearers, are enemies to God—let me ask you to consider the facts a little more attentively; and do not try to hide what must be known, if it be true, but endeavour to discover the fact of the case as God sees it, and to judge yourselves now as you will be judged by Him hereafter.

Have you not, my dear hearers, disliked the main provisions of the Gospel? There are some unhappy persons in our day, who do not hesitate to express the utmost contempt and aversion for the whole system of religion revealed in the Gospel. Perhaps by the merciful providence of God you have been preserved from that extravagant opposition to it, because He has granted to you from your earliest childhood to the present day to be placed in circumstances, in which those prejudices are subdued. But still, have you not had an insuperable dislike to the Gospel itself? If not, why have you not received it? Why have you not believed it? Why have you not obeyed it to the saving of the soul? It is the love of sin, it is the

hatred of holiness and truth, which have opposed your heart to the Gospel of Christ; and so you are opposed to those perfections of the Almighty, from which the Gospel came. And I assure you, that it wants nothing but a change of circumstances, to make that opposition which you have to the law and the will of God prove itself to be enmity to your Creator Himself.

Perhaps there is a fear of feeling actual animosity to an almighty and omniscient Being. God can do with you what He pleases; God has a perfect knowledge of what you are; and it is an awful thing for a creature to feel actual animosity to such a Being as that. But still a greater fear, did it come, might (overcoming that) show all the opposition of your nature to God in its true light. In some cases this has happened; and I would call your attention to one or two, in order to lead you to judge what might be under altered circumstances the feelings of your own minds.

At the time of the Reformation, when persecution was excessive, a Venetian advocate of the name of Spyra was led, during the great progress that the Reformation then made in the north of Italy, to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel; but being afraid for his income and for his reputation, and being threatened with the tortures of the Inquisition, this unhappy man denied the Gospel and embraced again the tenets of the Church of Rome. After this he fell into a state of desperation. Many eminent persons visited him, and numbers of Protestant ministers and reformers tried to console him and to draw him back again to penitence and to God; but among many awful expressions, which that unhappy man used in the course of his declining health and in his progress towards the grave, there were these—"I once thought I did know God to be my Father, not only by creation, but by regeneration, and that I knew him by His beloved Son, the author and finisher of our salvation; I could pray to Him, and hope for pardon of sin from Him; I thought I had a taste of His sweetness, peace and comfort; now, contrarily, I know God, not as a Father, but as an enemy; and (what

is more) my heart even hates God, and seeks to get above Him! I have nothing else to fly to but terror and despair." He resisted all exhortation and consolation, and continued from time to time to use similar expressions, growing more fearful as he advanced towards his end. On one occasion he said—"My heart is estranged from God; I cannot call Him 'Father!' from my heart; all good motions are quite gone; my heart is full of malediction, hatred, and blasphemy against God; I grow more and more hardened in heart, and I cannot, I cannot stop."

That which brought this wretched man, after so much profession of religion, to this felt and conscious and avowed enmity to God, was the prevailing fear he had of His wrath, unmingled with hope. And wherever there is the natural opposition of heart to God, I am persuaded that that man's circumstances would be enough to bring out the same enmity, because it happens whenever persons come into those circumstances.

It may be thought that he was a fearful apostate and that God had left him, and therefore that the enmity he felt is not to be taken as proving the tendency of our corrupted nature. But here is another instance, in a person who became one of the most devoted Christians that ever lived; I mean, the missionary Brainerd. Under the convictions of sin, which he had before conversion, he has these expressions—"The many disappointments, and great distresses and perplexities I met with, put me into a most horrible frame of contesting with the Almighty, with an inward vehemence and virulence, finding fault with His ways of dealing with mankind. I had strange projects full of atheism, contriving to disappoint God's designs and decrees concerning me or to escape His notice and hide myself from Him. But when on reflection I saw these projects were vain and would not serve me, and that I could contrive nothing for my own relief, this would throw my mind into the most horrid frame, to wish there was no God, or to wish there were some other God that could controul Him.

The thoughts of the strictness of the law or the sovereignty of God would so irritate the corruption of my heart, which I had so watched over and hoped I had brought to a good frame, that it would break over all bounds, and burst forth on all sides, like the floods of waters when they break down their dam."

In this case, my brethren, the enmity he felt towards his Maker arose from the same state, namely, a dread of His wrath while he knew not how to escape it. And if there be a fixed opposition of heart to the Gospel and to the law of God, no person wants any thing else than this, to have a just light thrown on the character of God, His threatenings and His power, in conjunction with a just view of his own sinfulness, to awaken all this conscious positive enmity to his Creator. Do not think, that because you are not conscious of that enmity it does not exist. It is latent now; but as torment calls forth the enmity of the damned in hell, so the dread of torment would even now, if it were unmingled with a sense of mercy, awaken in your hearts, yet unconverted and unsubdued, the same enmity to God. That is, you would hate—*you do hate*—a Being that is the most faithful, the most kind, the most gentle, patient, forgiving and loving of all beings, only because He is holy and just and true.

2. You ought, my brethren, supremely to have feared God. Instead of which, can you not recal many occasions, in which you have feared a little ridicule more than you feared God? Nay, up to this day have you not feared to part with a little sin, more than you have dreaded His displeasure and His wrath.

3. You ought entirely to have believed the Word of God; for He is true and faithful. Instead of believing it, you have received it all either with doubt or denial; either arguing against it and nourishing the most baseless prejudices rather than receive it heartily, or (if you have acknowledged it) showing the unbelief of your heart still more remarkably by acting constantly as if it were false. Professing to believe it because you could not resist the proofs that it

wasthe Word of God, and unable to reject its application to your own case, you have yet acted constantly as though it were false or as if it did not concern you.

4. Of all beings He was most worthy to be trusted. You ought to have put your souls into His care; you ought to have sought your entire salvation from His love; you ought to have trusted Him with every interest for time and for eternity, and given yourselves without reserve to His care and love, to be happy and holy for ever. Instead of which, you have trusted any thing rather than God. You have never trusted His goodness, never trusted His care, never put yourselves into the hands of the Almighty to be made happy by His grace and love. And to this day you trust your own wisdom, and trust your friends on earth—you trust *any thing*, rather than Him, who is most worthy to be trusted.

5. You ought, my brethren, supremely to have sought the glory of God in all you did. Instead of which, you have constantly followed self-will, and have sought your own ways and your own happiness. You must acknowledge, if you think justly, that you have put *yourselves* in the place of God, seeking continually your own pleasure, your own greatness, your own prosperity, in disregard of the glory of God.

6. Above all, my brethren, you ought to have obeyed Him constantly; every one of His laws ought to have been venerated and observed. But the very essence of your unconverted state is that opposition of heart to His will, which has ever prevented you from obeying Him.

All this opposition of your nature against a Being, who is infinitely worthy to be loved, feared, believed, trusted, glorified, obeyed, has broken out in most fearful acts of sin, and formed most fearful habits that have defiled your whole lives. God has called you in His law to many positive actions, which are for your good in the promotion of His glory; He has bidden you do many things with reference to your fellow-creatures; and He has commanded you to cherish certain personal virtues. All this law has been trampled under foot, habitually and wilfully disregarded by you

He bade you to hallow His name, venerate and observe His day, read carefully and devoutly His Word, maintain the habit of secret prayer, and continually praise His name. All these laws have been set aside. You must know that you have often profaned His name—by using it lightly and irreverently, if not (like others) with open profanity. You must know that you have disregarded His Word; it has not been read, meditated upon and devoutly considered by you. You have probably neglected secret prayer; either omitting it altogether, or performing it with such a heartless formality, as made it in fact rather ask for vengeance than seek mercy at His hands. You have been commanded to honour and observe His day; and if you have not totally desecrated it as many have, still you have found it a wearisome day, a day of hard irksome bondage to you, a day of which you have only given Him a part and even in that service have withdrawn from Him your hearts. Called to praise Him for all His mercies, you have been silent; you have not spoken of Him to others, you have not taken delight in the mention of His name to them, but have maintained a sullen silence respecting His nature, His perfections and His ways. Then too He has given you “holy and just and good” laws to regulate your conduct to your fellow-creatures; but pass in review your conduct towards others, and see how far those laws have been obeyed. He bound you by the plainest commands, that you should be just and true, that you should be honest and kind to your fellow-creatures—that you should abstain from angry passions, from evil speaking and slander—that you should live to promote their happiness, and act towards them as a brother. How far have you obeyed those laws? Are you not conscious, that on many occasions you have been betrayed into acts of injustice and cruelty to men? Sometimes you have violated truth; perhaps directly, perhaps by exaggeration and concealment—many, many a time—thus disregarding His law. Do you not feel, that instead of maintaining kindness of heart you have indulged in angry passions, vehement tempers, unkind (if not furious)

words? you were commanded of God to seek the welfare of your fellow creatures; instead of which, on how many occasions have you done them wrong and mischief! In all the relations which you have filled, have there not been sad and fearful neglects? You ought to have taught your servants, to have trained up your children in the fear of God, to have promoted the instruction and welfare of your neighbours; but has all this been done? Have not your servants, been left uninstructed—those under your care no more regarded, than if they had they had no souls to be saved or you had no responsibility? Have your children seen by your example and heard by your words, that the salvation of their souls was the one thing needful, and that they were God's, and that you considered them as His? Have you endeavoured to promote the salvation of your fellow men? or have your example and conduct been calculated only to perpetuate their ungodliness and to confirm them in sin? and further; God has commanded you to cherish various personal virtues. He bade you be temperate and pure. How often have you, by excess in eating or drinking, by acts or words of impurity, violated this law! You have disregarded the plainest commands He gave you for your good. And in this violation of His law and of all its provisions (sometimes by omission and defect, sometimes by positive transgression), all your faculties and powers, your whole nature has been employed in the service of sin. All the faculties of your mind. Your affections, which were meant to be set on God, have been set on evil; and you, my unconverted hearers, know it. Your imagination, which ought to have pictured to you the happiness of His service and His people, has been employed in perverse imaginings of what was evil. Your memory, that ought to have been stored with Divine truth, has been retentive of evil, but soon lost all that was good. Your fancy and your power of anticipation, given you by God to consider the blessings in store for His people and to lead you to love Him more and to serve Him better, have been employed to anticipate success in criminal undertakings or to

conjecture the delight which an indulgence in sin would bring you. God gave you an understanding, that you might know the truth and maintain it; and that understanding has been debauched and has betrayed the truth, it has maintained error, and you have perversely used your reasoning powers either to palliate your own transgressions or perhaps to argue against the Gospel of Christ. God gave you a powerful will that you might resist evil and be steadfast against what He prohibits: that will has not been opposed to evil, it has been set against good and has been constantly turned by you towards iniquity. And if all the powers of the mind and all the faculties of the heart have been employed in rebellion against God, so too have all the powers of your body no less. The eye and the ear, which ought to have listened to His praises and taken in the view of His various works till your own soul was full of admiration and delight in God, have been made the means of sin and inlets for temptation. Your hands and feet, by which God ought to have been served, have been swift to do evil; they have been to you the ready ministers of sin. Thus body and soul have been debased—the head and the heart filled with evil. And this has been the character of your whole life, from childhood to the present hour. Is there a place in which you have not sinned? Is there a company in which you have not sinned? Among all persons, in all the relations of life, through all times, throughout the whole of life up to this moment, all your faculties have been thus defiled and all have been ministering to evil. I do not now speak of the guilt of all this, its criminality; on that I purpose to fix your attention this evening: but I speak now of the variety, the vast variety, the immense number of your sins. They are innumerable, and say *you*, what all this *must* deserve from the hands of a holy God.

I will only tell you, my brethren, of one feature more in your past conduct, which I hope the Lord will also fix upon your minds and memories. For all these transgressions, when once their minds are enlightened, His people are brought to the

most humble confession and to the deepest contrition. To use the language of the prophet—"They loathe themselves in their own sight, for their iniquities and for their abominations," when God is pacified towards them; to use the language of the same prophet again—"They remember and are confounded, and never open their mouth any more." All self-justification is gone for ever: and one who, like the apostle Paul, can labour with unwearied assiduity and make the greatest sacrifices for God and for his fellow-creatures, devote all the powers of a strong understanding and all the energy of a vigorous character to the service of God and his fellow-men, can to the end of life speak with unpretended humiliation of himself as "the chief of sinners." This is what a just view of men's sins leads them to. What has been *your view* of all your guilt? You have argued against it; you have palliated your sins; you have turned your thoughts away from them; you have endeavoured to present them to yourselves as not so very sinful. And whatever has been the course of your minds with respect to this subject, it is true of every unconverted person in this house of prayer, that they have remained impenitent to this day; because had you been penitent, you would have turned from sin, you would have served God, you would have loved Him, you would have glorified Him. And the fact of your being still unconverted proves, that whether you have more or less of conviction, you are still in a state of impenitent hardness, thinking less of the evil which you have committed than it deserves—so much less, that up to this hour you have been resolved to continue in sin, and have continued in sin in fact.

Now, my brethren, let me beg you to reflect seriously upon this extent of your sinfulness. For, my dear hearers, you may mis-judge, but God never will; or you may forget, but He remembers; He has noticed every sin you have committed, He has not forgotten one, and they will all (be assured) be brought sooner or later into judgment. For these innumerable transgressions you have to answer. Whether you think it

or not, whether you believe it or not, you will have to answer to your Almighty Creator for every one. And you cannot answer to Him for "one charge of a thousand." And you have no atonement to present. And with all these sins defiling your hearts and loading conscience, you will very soon have to stand before God. This life is ebbing away fast; you will very soon have passed through it. And then when you stand before God, remember that He will not judge you according to your own views of sin, nor will He judge you according to what is commonly thought of it in the world; but He has one rule of judgment; it is His Word. I shall have other occasions of calling your attention to what that rule is; but at present let me remind you, that according to it you cannot "stand in the judgment" with God.

And, my brethren, this simple view of the amount of your sins, ought "to shunt you up" (to use the apostle's expression) "to the Gospel." It ought to prompt you to desire most earnestly, that as there is no other salvation except in receiving Christ, you might from this day be His disciple—that having no other hope, you may have hope in Him. And as according (to the explanation I have already given) you need that the Spirit of God should renew your heart, to bring you to that faith in Christ without which you will still repel your own happiness in disregarding your known duty, this ought to lead you, this very day and throughout the remainder of this day, to seek that your hearts may be changed, and that the Spirit of God would bring you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to the salvation of your souls.

My brethren, let me beg you attentively to weigh these statements. And let me ask all my hearers, to unite solemnly 'his day in prayer, that their companions in this congregation may be thus blessed of God—that the Lord may not overlook one heart still hard and impenitent, that He may have mercy upon all, and bring young and old, rich and poor, to possess in Christ Jesus "that great salvation," for which he thought it worth while to die, and through which the worst may reach a blissful eternity.

SERMON IV.

THE DESERT OF THEIR SINFULNESS SET BEFORE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 8, 1839.

“For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.—Romans iii. 23.

THE omniscient God discerns, in this congregation, who have “fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the Gospel,” and who have not. The Lord knows who have been brought to repent of sin, to depend exclusively on Christ for their salvation, supremely to love God, and steadily to serve Him—who have been led to “seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness first,” and are now daily seeking a preparation for His kingdom in glory; and the Lord sees who have not done so, but are at present alienated and “enemies in their minds by wicked works.” And as God sees it, so those who are in this lamentable state, must in almost all instances have some suspicion that it is so, and in many cases must have very prevailing evidence that they are not among the children of God. It is to that class, that I would now especially speak: to those, who have reason to know that the Almighty God looks upon them still as classed among His enemies—who, whatever their external habits and professions, have never as yet had their hearts changed.

I have set before *you*, my friends this morning, in some inadequate measure, the number and variety of your sins. I have done this, that I might (if possible) bring you to see the necessity of seeking salvation in Christ without delay and without hesitation. St. Paul has told us, that “the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ;” that is, it is by the condemnation which it pronounces against sin, that sinners must usually be brought to feel the need of a Saviour. And that is the proper use of the law. It is to “bring us to Christ,” to make us feel that we are lost without Christ. And for this purpose, I

have set before you some of those breaches of the law of God, of which all the unregenerate and impenitent in this assembly have been guilty. I have shown you (however imperfectly,) that your dispositions towards the ever-blessed God are wrong, and that you have broken His commands with reference to Himself, your fellow-creatures and yourselves. I have shown you, that your whole nature has been employed in the service of sin. All the faculties and powers of your bodies and your minds—innumerable thoughts, words and actions—testify against you. There is no place in which you have lived and no company among which you have moved, no undertaking in which you have been engaged, but what has witnessed some sin. It has defiled the whole course of your lives; it has employed against the blessed God all your powers; it has filled up all your time, throughout the whole course of your rational accountable existence up to this day.

“All have sinned.” And for this “sin,” what, my brethren, do you think that you deserve? I say, *You*; because, though it were perhaps softer to speak of sin in the abstract or to think of other offenders against God, my chief object, my beloved brethren, is *with you*, and I would wish (if possible) to place you apart before God, and lead you to think of no one else but yourselves, and to anticipate the decisions of the last day *now*. And therefore I ask you, not what unregenerate sinners deserve for sin, but what *you* do.

What do you think that you deserve from God? Our text says, “all have sinned” and all “come short of the glory of God.” All (in consequence of sin) are

deprived of His glory—can never hope to see the glory of God in heaven, or to share in that glory, which the Lord gives to His people there. Left to themselves they will be excluded from it. I ask you, Do you believe that you deserve it? God's Word declares that it will happen; do you feel that you deserve it.

If not, it shall be my business, with the help of God, to endeavour to convince you this evening that *you do*, and to lead you to see (without presuming that you have departed from the law of God more than men in general, allowing that perhaps you have not done so even so much) that *you*, you in your impenitent state, you unless converted by the grace of God, you if dying as you now are, must "come short of the glory of God" because you *deserve* to do so.

May it please God, that this application of his law may be the "schoolmaster to bring you to Christ"—may compel you to seek salvation in the only "name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved!"

I. The first consideration, which may show you that you deserve to be excluded from heaven, is that your present condition unfits you for its glory.

You know upon the authority of the Word of God—you might know by many other considerations too—that heaven is a holy place, where those only dwell who supremely and perfectly love their Maker, reverence Him, delight in Him, praise Him, glorify Him, are devoted to Him for ever and for ever. And *you*, as we have seen already, are nourishing dispositions precisely opposite to these. You love him not; you reverence Him not; you do not live for His glory; you do not serve and obey Him; you have a spirit precisely opposite to the reigning spirit of heaven. How can you be admitted there? God declares that without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Do you not feel in your inmost souls, that this is just? An unholy being, alienated from God, living for self, disregarding His will, opposed to the great Creator—to be admitted into a holy society, in which pre-

vail those heavenly affections I have named! Justice and mercy alike forbid it. Would you, who are a father, admit into the bosom of your family the thief, the murderer, the adulterer, the drunkard, to be the companion of your children? And if not, then you yourselves pronounce that it would be unfitting in the government of God, to admit an unholy and an unchanged sinner into fellowship with all His children above.

II. In the next place, you deserve exclusion from heaven, because you do to this moment despise heaven.

Do not tell me, that you wish to be safe there; do not say, that the thoughts of it have sometimes moved your affections. I tell you, my friends, you despise heaven. For you will not take the road that leads to it. Innumerable, inestimable mercies are offered to you, and you despise them. The favour of God, the pardon of your sins, the renewal of your hearts, His gracious providential care over you. His love for you, a place amongst His people, a heaven of eternal glory with all its unknown blessings—are all *despised*; that is, you prefer to them all a little of the favour of the world—a little worldly pleasure—some vile sin. You will live in sin, though it will cost you hell. You are impenitent for those habits, which must debar you from heaven. You *despise* heaven and only because sin has made you so blind and short-sighted, that the trifles of a day or hour seem to you greater than eternity. But what can be more just, than that if you despise that blessing, it should be withheld? Or how think you, that when you stand before your Judge at last, you could say to Him, you could *have the heart* to say to Him—"I thought scorn of this endless and boundless glory, I preferred my lusts, I would rather have my worldly interests, I would rather have the flattery and fondness of the world than all this; and now give me that which I have through life despised?" You know that *then* you dare not prefer such a plea: why dream of it *now*? Or why suppose that you do not merit exclusion from that glory, which you manifestly despise?

III. In the next place, my dear friends, you will be convinced at last, if you are not now, that you deserve to be excluded from heaven, on account of the character of your sins against God, against your fellow-creatures, and against yourselves. The peculiar character of those sins must show distinctly, if you ever ponder the subject, that you must deserve to be excluded from heaven.

God has commanded you supremely to love Him ; and you know that the commandment is right. Instead of which, you have been profoundly indifferent to Him. Why should the Almighty *love you* ? You have, notwithstanding all His kindness and goodness, cherished an opposition of heart, which a little change of circumstances might easily bring out into the most awful enmity ; how can you expect, that when you pass into the next world He should not hate you—that is, He should not hate the entire character, which has been made up by your whole course of rebellion, however He might look with compassion on your misery ? You never have sought the glory of God ? why should He ever seek your glory ? You never gave Him glory ; why should He give it you ? You never have sought to promote His cause in the world or serve Him ; why should he serve your interests ? You have refused to praise Him for His favours, you have never returned Him gratitude for innumerable mercies ; why should those mercies be continued any more ? You have never employed the faculties and powers that He gave you, to give Him honour ; why should He continue those faculties and powers in any pleasurable exercise ? You see, then, that the character of your habitual and constant conduct towards the Almighty must make you feel, that you do not deserve admission to His glory.

You may judge the same, if you only think how you are acting to your fellow-creatures. God has placed you in this world, not only to serve Him, but to serve your fellow-creatures too ; you are bound, by your conversation and example, by the use of your property and influence, to en-

deavour to bring them to eternal happiness —to turn them away from sin, to beseech them to seek heaven. Have you done so ? If not—if you have never sought their salvation, when you knew they were on the road to ruin—why should the Almighty grant salvation *to you* ? You sought not theirs ; why should He seek yours ? Nay it is well if your example and conversation, your opinions and your influence, have not conduced already to the ruin of others ; it is too probable, that many among you have directly or indirectly hardened others to sin, led them down towards perdition, rivetted on their souls the chains which Satan had formed for them ; [and why, if you have been accessory to the destruction of others, should not God visit you with destruction ?

Think, then, of your conduct with reference to your own interests ; and you must see that you deserve to be excluded from heaven. You have never prayed earnestly for eternal life ; why should God give it you ? You have never consented to make slight sacrifices to attain it ; why should God bestow on you that, towards which you are so profoundly indifferent ? You have never even confessed your sins heartily ; why should God forgive you ? On the contrary, my brethren, you have neglected the invitations which He has given to you on many occasions to turn to Him and live ; why then should those invitations be renewed ? You have wasted a long day of mercy ; why should not that day of mercy close ? You have chosen to serve sin, deliberately chosen it ; why should not the Lord leave you to your choice ? You have been more pleased with the service of Satan than with the service of God, and have served him, and do serve Him still ; why should not the Lord leave you in his hands for ever ? You know that God has pronounced a curse upon impenitent disobedience ; you choose to disobey still ; *you choose* then His declared curse ; why should not the Lord leave you under it for ever ?

Now, my friends, I know you cannot answer these questions. I know the only way of escape from them is to forget them. But woe be to you, if you do. They are

meant for your welfare. Answer them in the only way they can be answered, by fleeing to the cross, and by asking that God should give as an unmerited favour through Christ what you deserve to lose for ever.

IV. Then, as the last consideration, you deserve to be excluded from heaven on account of the infinite excellence and infinite love of the God, against whom you daily and hourly sin.

Do you not know, my friends, that God deserves you should love and serve Him perfectly? Do you not acknowledge it habitually? Have you not sometimes caught a glimpse of the truth of that statement? Have all the manifestations of His glorious attributes spoken to you in vain? Do all creation, all providence, all nature speak to you in vain and tell you He is worthy to be loved? Do all the examples of His saints on earth, and all that is revealed of His saints in heaven, speak nothing to your hearts as to the supreme and perfect love, adoration and service, which you ought to pay to such a Being? How much are you obliged to serve and love God. Have you not obligations laid on you to love and serve Him, proportioned to His own perfections? Is not this a rule of judging which you familiarly apply in the habits of life? Ought you not to love one, who is more excellent, more than one who is less so? Ought you not to love one, who has more goodness, more justice, more compassion, more tenderness, more truth, more than one who has less of all these moral virtues? And if so, how much ought you to love *God!* Could you love Him as the highest archangel, you know it would not be too much. Could you love Him with an infinite love, you know it would not be too much. But in the place of all this, you have been indifferent to your Creator. You *have been*—my friends, you *are*; every impenitent person here is indifferent to his Creator. He does not love Him; he cannot love Him; he feels in his conscience, that all the claims of God upon him fall upon his heart like the soft summer zephyr upon the sterile rock—

that his soul is not moved by all the claims of his Creator and by all his infinite desert—that he loves Him *not*. But where—where is the bottom of that deep depravity? What is it, for a creature formed for this very end that he might love the adorable Creator, to have faculties capable of loving Him, to have proofs of His various perfections, to see them all, to acknowledge them all, and yet to be incapable of loving Him? What an unspeakable depravity that nature must have sustained, that ought to be filled with adoring love, and feels nothing but coldness.

If this were all, you must feel, my friends, that you deserve to be excluded from His presence, whom you cannot love. But this is not all. As I have set before you to-day, “the carnal mind is *enmity* against God.” Your unrenewed minds are “*enmity*.” It is now hidden, like a serpent among flowers, by the various blessings of His providence, by the employments of a busy life, by the fear you have of avowing to yourselves the awful truth, by the flattery with which you sometimes speak of His adorable perfections; that enmity is hidden now, because you are busy and because you are happy. Take away that happiness, let destitution and inactivity be your portion (as ere long alas! they must be); and then, then you will feel, shut up under the anger of God, incapable of escaping from a holy Avenger, conscious that His attributes are your ruin and that they must be so, and that you have no excuse and cannot complain even of that which is your everlasting ruin, and you will say, as it was imagined that he who is the prince of misery and guilt once said—

“Be then His love accurs’d, since, love or hate,
It deals alike to me eternal woe.”

It is too true, in the constitution of our nature, that a man thus under the wrath of God must in his corrupt state hate Him. And you, you have that principle now. A little while, and it will appear in its naked atrocity; and nothing but a few circumstances, which might easily and promptly be removed, hinders you from feeling it in all its naked atrocity now. But is it con-

ceivable—can you imagine—that a being formed to love Him who is infinitely worthy of being loved and served, the best, the kindest, the truest, the most benignant, the most faithful, the most bountiful, the most condescending, the most holy of all beings that are, Him who unites in Himself all the loveliness of the creation which sprung from Him, and whom all the creation that is sinless adores and loves with unceasing wonder and endless admiration—that you should *hate God*, and yet hope that you shall not be excluded from His presence for ever?

But again; you deserve to be excluded from it, because you sin against a Being of infinite love, and a Being who has shown an infinite kindness to you. I have kept out of sight purposely one gigantic sin, that eclipses and overtops all the rest—one crowning and damning proof of depravity; it deserves to be presented to you in all its separate magnitude, and therefore I shall not speak to you now of—rejecting Christ. That is the damning sin. But apart from that, think only of what He has done for you, think only of what you His enemies have enjoyed at His hands, think only what in your impenitent hardness of heart God has lavished upon you of His favours; and then say whether to sin against infinite kindness does not deserve exclusion from His presence. Has not every event of your life that gave you happiness, told you you must love Him and serve Him? Has not every hour's enjoyment you have felt, every faculty in the play and exercise of which you found pleasure, every friendship which filled your heart with comfort and exultation, every hope that you have had of the future of this life, told you with a voice so loud, you ought to love and serve God. You heard; or rather, you were deaf, and heard them *not*. You could enjoy His gifts, and never love the Giver. Self reigned still; a proud self-love reigned over the whole course of your conduct and over every play of your affections, while that Being of infinite kindness has been forgotten; nay—*hated*. And for this, only let reason decide, only listen to the Word of God, only hearken to

the united judgment of the whole church of Christ, and you will see, my friends, that you deserve to be excluded from the presence of God for ever.

“ All have sinned, and all come short of the glory of God.”

In reviewing these considerations, I would now affectionately ask you, whether you are brought to own that your sins do deserve this awful end. Naturally your hearts must oppose that conclusion; you would argue as much as possible to avoid it; you would perhaps avail yourselves of every subterfuge, to escape from so melancholy a conclusion. But let me ask you, my friends, notwithstanding all, do you own it? Do you feel now, not that others, but that *you* deserve to be excluded from the presence of God for ever?

If you still deny it, remember you deny it without a shadow of proof. Remember that you deny it in the face of evidence, which must one day or another overwhelm you. If you deny it, remember, my friends, you deny it against the opinions of all the best and most enlightened upon earth. Go where you will, into every land under heaven, and select those who the most diligently serve God and their fellow-creatures, whose hearts and lives are the most holy, who bear most manifestly in their whole deportment the proofs that they are the children of God! ask them all, in every land, of every denomination into which the Church of Christ is divided, and with one voice they will tell you, the unregenerate and the impenitent deserves to be excluded from heaven.

Perhaps you say, my friends, that you are not accountable to man for your conduct, and their opinions will not decide your state. And it is true. But there is another, that judges. God Almighty has decided. God Almighty has declared, not on one occasion, but on many, by the voice of the most awful facts no less than by the most explicit statements of His Word—that you deserve to be excluded, and that He will act towards you as you deserve. Do not deceive yourselves, then; for that which is the concurrent judgment of the whole church of

God, in which they are only in accordance with all blessed beings who through faith in Christ have reached a sinless perfection and eternal joy—that judgment will be confirmed at the last day.

And do you say, that *they* deserve it no less than you—that your ministers and your Christian friends deserve it too? Yes, brethren, we all are involved in that condemnation. But then your Christian brethren own it; they have seen it; they have acknowledged it; it has compelled them to take refuge beneath the cross; it has driven them to the Son of God. Why does it not drive *you*? They have sought and found refuge in Christ, because the law taught them they were ruined; why do not *you* seek refuge in the same ark, in which you may ride in safety over all the billows of sorrow on earth and of wrath at the judgment? Oh! that you may be persuaded, like them, to seek an interest in that Saviour, in whom you may find refuge! The hour is not quite gone, in which you may escape destruction; it is not quite too late to discover that you, a sinner, are ruined. That discovery may be your salvation. Repel it not, I charge you in the name of God: repel it not, however painful. Give yourself to these proofs; acknowledge the whole of that condemnation, which you deserve from your Judge; dwell upon the humbling truth, till it alarms you as it ought—till you feel the preciousness of that Saviour, who died to rescue us—till you feel that there is an absorbing interest in the doctrines of the cross, an overwhelming necessity for a participation in the redemption there accomplished—till you are conscious that the one great blessing, in the search of which you would wear out your strength, employ your faculties, and devote all your life, is that you may find an interest in Christ, through the drawing and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Oh! dwell on your sins, till you are compelled to come to the Saviour, and till you find what the apostle said to be true, “The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.”

My reason for thus dwelling on this painful topic is that all of you, my dear hearers, who are in danger of perishing,

who if you died as you are *would* perish, who have perhaps refused many invitations, violated many convictions of conscience, broken through many resolutions, hardened your hearts after many religious emotions, lived perhaps to more than the middle of life in obduracy, who are going down to the grave unprepared, without an interest in the Saviour, without a rational hope of heaven, still numbered among the enemies of God, may at last find peace among His friends. Oh! do not repel one more message, which God has sent to you; but dwell upon this humbling truth, that you deserve to be excluded from His presence, till, my dear friends, finding that you are lost sheep in danger of eternally perishing, you never find rest but in coming back to the fold of the good Shepherd, whose voice now calls to you on the barren mountains. And if you find that the ways of sin are barren, and that the enemies of your peace are in full pursuit, and that there is danger and death around you and no peace or safety but in Christ, then, oh! yield to the voice of that blessed Saviour, who has come to seek and to save, and go back with Him to that fold, in which His sheep lie at peace, safe under His care. You have sinned enough; you deserve, as the consequence of those sins, to die eternally. Dwell upon the misery to which sin has reduced you, till you feel kindling in your hearts those emotions that once agitated the wretched prodigal; and when you look upon the beggary to which your sin has brought you, your loss of all real good, your approaching death, then, feeling how ruined you are by sin, begin your trembling and painful way back again to your Father's house. Lift your dying eye up to Him, who still has mercy for His prodigal wanderers; and rest not, my friends, rest not, till, deeply convinced and abundantly humbled and taught the blessedness of salvation in Christ, you come back in the appointed way, and the prodigal is once more in his Father's arms, safe, lowly, contrite, repentant, grateful, and filled with a joy that shall only expand into the bliss of heaven.

SERMON V.

THE GUILT OF THE UNCONVERTED IN NEGLECTING THE OFFERED SALVATION.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 15, 1839.

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”—Hebrews ii. 3.

IN addressing, last Sabbath, those in this congregation who had reason to believe that they were still unconverted persons, careless and impenitent, I endeavoured to set before you, my hearers, the number and magnitude of your sins, together with that criminality attached to them, which threatens you with eternal exclusion from the presence of God; and I exhorted you, in considering both these points at once, to “flee from the wrath to come.” Another week has since passed by, in which you have had many hours for thought and prayer and repentance. Has that change been accomplished? Are you now contrite sinners, humbled before God, believing in Christ only for the salvation of your souls? Or are you still as impenitent as then? Are you yet old or young, unconverted, and therefore liable to die in your sins?

If so, again I assure you, that your dispositions are ungodly, and that you have to answer to the Almighty for innumerable sins committed in thought, word, and act. Your nature is corrupted; your whole life is full of sin. You have sinned in every undertaking, in every place, on all occasions. And you cannot answer to your Maker and your Judge for “one charge of a thousand.” Again, I assure you, that for these sins you deserve exclusion from the presence of God—because you are unfitted by your present condition for the enjoyments of heaven—because you have yourselves despised it—because the different habits which you cherish, towards God, your fellow-creatures, and yourselves, render you undeserving of it—and because you have a guilt proportioned to the infinite goodness and grace of the Being, against whom you wilfully and habitually sin.

Are you still left in impenitence and hardness of heart, notwithstanding these charges? Perhaps it may be, that you are convinced of their truth, and are yet impenitent; or perhaps it may be, that you deny their application to yourselves, and are therefore impenitent. Whichever it be, I proceed now to bring against you one other charge weightier than all, and which threatens you with a more awful end to your present short-lived existence. I bring it with the greatest reluctance; I feel involved in the same condemnation; but still, my dear hearers, it is better for you to know the whole truth while yet a gracious God invites you to be happy for ever, than to find out your delusion when the time of mercy is past. And therefore I now proceed to charge you with the guilt of rejecting that “great salvation” which God has provided in the Gospel, and to ask you, in the language of our text, How can you possibly escape if you do neglect it?

To the latter question, indeed, I shall endeavour to return you a plain and conclusive answer this evening; with God's help I will show you then the certainty, that if you remain impenitent you must be severely judged. But now let me confine my attention to the former point—the guilt of that rejection—preparing the way for that condemnation which will assuredly follow.

First, in order to understand this guilt, let us consider the greatness of this salvation; let us, secondly, notice what it is to neglect it; and, thirdly, examine the guilt of that neglect. In doing which, I earnestly seek from God (as *I have sought*), that those who are thus careless and unconverted may be led to a full conviction of the truth and extent of their guilt, and to such a sense

of it, through the Divine teaching, as may make them "flee from the wrath to come."

I. First, my brethren, let us notice the greatness of the salvation, which every unconverted person in this church despises.

It is a deliverance from the eternal ruin due to our sins. It is a deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan on earth, and from the doom of Satan after death. It is a deliverance from present terror and from eternal remorse. It is a deliverance from the wrath of an infinite Avenger. It is deliverance from a sorrow, which is near at hand, inevitable, intolerable, eternal. It is a deliverance from all that thought shrinks to contemplate, and more than the imagination ever conceived.

It is, on the other hand, an admission to blessings as vast. To adoption into the family of God; to all the privileges of his believing people; to be loved by Him, watched over, provided for, cheered, consoled, sustained, and guided to glory. It is admission to justification through the blood of the Saviour—to His eternal friendship and favour—to the guidance and governance of the Holy Spirit—to peace and joy in believing—to an eternal life of blessedness beyond thought, when this day of discipline and toil is over.

It is an invitation to accept these blessings, given after the greatest provocation—a guilt which is incalculable. It is a salvation offered to those, who by the obduracy of their hearts and the ungodliness of their lives, persevered in through long years, have deserved that the Lord should exclude them from His favour for ever. It is an invitation to enjoy blessings innumerable and invaluable, given to those who have done all to destroy themselves, and whose obduracy of heart demands a corresponding punishment.

It is a salvation thus "great"—from eternal hell to eternal heaven—offered freely to those, who never can deserve it; all whose confessions and contrition and effort and prayer are less than they ought to render every moment, leave them just as guilty as they found them, have nothing in them of

the nature of an atonement, and who cannot possibly deserve to avert the Divine wrath.

It is a salvation provided for such rebellious transgressors at the cost of the death of Christ. For, freely as the Lord forgives sinners, it is not in one instance in a way to dishonour Himself; and though He asks no atonement from the penitent believer (who can render none), He has asked for an atonement to be rendered by his Surety and his great Deliverer. The question was, then, should the Son of God suffer or should the sinner suffer for his sins? Either we must perish everlastingly (as was our due), or He must come to the cross to suffer in our stead. He well knew the alternative that lay before Him. God the Son knew well, that if we were to be saved by Him, our sin must bring Him to shame and sorrow and agony and death; it must be so, or we must die. And He freely chose the former. He would not have us perish, and therefore He would himself endure all that was appointed. He knew that He would be called to endure the contempt of the great and proud, with the insult of the brutal; and He chose it all. He knew that as a lamb amidst a herd of wolves, He would stand among hypocrites, fanatics, infidels, and profligates, to endure all that malignant priests and proud rulers and a brutal soldiery and a degraded populace could inflict; He well foresaw, before He underwent it, the buffeting and the spitting, and the nails run through His hands, and the agony of the cross; He knew that His head must bow in death, and that the spear must pierce His side; and He chose all this rather than that we should die. Unless we know, unless we have comprehended the infinite dignity of the Son of God—unless we have measured that glory, from which in His human nature He was separated—unless we have fathomed those profound sorrows He underwent, when He bore our iniquities in His own person on the tree—we have not yet beheld the vastness of the cost, at which the deliverance of a single sinner has been obtained.

And again; this salvation is now offered

by the same infinite love, which brought the Lord Jesus to the cross. The account given of that transaction in the Scripture is this: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The greatness of the gift measures the love which gave it; small love can make small sacrifices, and since God could give the best and greatest gift the love which gave it was infinite. But God, who changes not, has the same compassion for fallen sinners still; and it is in the exercise of that very compassion that made Him send the Lord Jesus Christ to die in our stead, that He now offers to each unconverted person here to pass by his multiplied transgressions, to forget the whole defilement of his nature, the whole corruption of his heart, and to receive him as a child. In the same compassion which made Him once give the Son of His love to die, He offers to each careless person here a portion in the privileges of His children, to be safe and peaceful on earth, to be inconceivably and eternally blessed in heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ, in the exercise of an infinite love, now offers the same blessings to each obdurate sinner here. He who once in His love came to the cross to save you all, in the same compassion does now invite you by me His unworthy minister to be His disciples—to be safe, to enjoy the blessing of His mediation, to have His friendship, His guidance for ever, and at last to come to His glory. God the Holy Spirit, in a compassion equally infinite, is ready at this moment to enter the hearts of those, who have hitherto rejected His love. He is ready to enlighten, to comfort, to sanctify, to guide, to govern you; He is ready to make you perfect in holiness now, and to guide you to perfection in bliss hereafter. The image of God, which you have lost, He is ready to replace; the blessings of God's children, which you have forfeited, He is ready to restore. And thus God, the Almighty God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—in the exercise of a compassion that is infinite, offers you all the blessings which Christ Jesus died to procure.

Surely a deliverance from such sorrows,

the admission to blessings so vast, offered after so many provocations, proposed to you freely, purchased at such a cost, and now again offered to you in the exercise of a love which is infinite, may well be termed by the apostle a "great salvation!"

II. What is it, in the next place, to neglect it?

It might seem that it was impossible to neglect a mercy such as this. The traveller, when he is dying of thirst in the desert, does not reject the gushing spring, which bubbling at his feet offers him refreshment and life. The prisoner does not hug his chain, and draw back from the sunshine and the liberty offered him, to the damps and darkness of his dungeon. The sick man never scorns health. The poor dejected and homeless wanderer would never refuse proffered wealth. Is it possible, then—is it possible—that blessings, which make the water in the desert, and liberty after bondage, and health and wealth comparatively trivial and insignificant, should ever be rejected?

Yet, brethren, it is not only possible to neglect this salvation, but it is too certain that it is very generally neglected—that while the road to perdition is crowded by multitudes, the road to glory is straight and narrow "and few there be that find it."

If you consider what it is to neglect this salvation, you will see at once how probable it is that many should neglect it. It is neglect, no doubt, to blaspheme that fairest and most faultless character, that was ever formed—to feel positive and avowed enmity to the Lord of glory, who in this world exhibited the Divine perfections. It is neglect of this great salvation, no doubt, to deny either the fact of a revelation or the truths that it contains, against evidence which is irresistible to an upright mind. It is neglect of this great salvation, no doubt, to misrepresent that Gospel, and deny its leading doctrines, though so explicitly recorded and revealed that no one anxious for truth would overlook them. It is a neglect of this great salvation, doubtless, professing to believe in Christ to construct to ourselves a method of salvation in which He is almost altogether overlooked, and

while He died to rescue us from deserved hell to look for salvation as the result of mere mercy, because we are not so very criminal—just as we should if there had been no Redeemer. It is a neglect of this great salvation, no doubt, to live in ignorance of its provisions, and after having spent ten, twenty, forty, fifty years with access, abundant access, to a full knowledge of its provisions, still to be in ignorance. But these are not the only ways, in which persons may neglect this great salvation. There is another way, more common among those that hear the Gospel than all these; there is another mode of neglecting it, which involves I fear a large number of those whom I address, in whatever guilt it comprehends. To neglect this great salvation is, evidently, not to obtain the blessings which it proposes; by whatever mode that neglect is manifested, in whatever way those blessings are lost, to lose them is to neglect this “great salvation.” God has offered them to sinners freely; He has told you, that every penitent believer shall enjoy them; He has set before you plainly the way in which they may be made yours; He has offered them only in that one way; and therefore if either another way of obtaining them is preferred, or if they are not sought in this way, then is such a person chargeable with neglecting this great salvation. God has declared, that He, who renouncing all self-righteousness and self-dependence as a ruined sinner looks solely to Christ for pardon and salvation, and so believes in Him as to be brought by that belief again to love and serve the God he ought ever to have loved and served, but whom he has hated and rebelled against—that sinner shall be saved; and if, my brethren, on any pretexts or by any methods, you fail of seeking this salvation in this appointed way, you must be chargeable with neglecting it. If you believe in Christ, if you love Him supremely, if you live to do His will, if you are day by day striving to catch His Spirit, if you are endeavouring to accomplish His will in the world, then have you sought and obtained this great salvation; but if you are conscious, that you have experienced nothing of all this, then are you still neglecting it.

My brethren, if he who, being in bondage, chooses, when offered liberty, to remain in his dungeon, neglects the deliverance that is proffered—if the savage, who parts with a heap of gold in exchange for some trifle that is offered him, undervalues the gold which he gives up—so if like them you choose to remain in bondage to sin, and are preferring some trivial enjoyments to those blessings which the Gospel offers, then are you also neglecting this great salvation. And whatever may be the circumstances under which you do it, they can make no alteration in this respect. It may be, that you neglect it through the fear of your fellow creatures, or through the dread of a change in your habits; it may be, that you neglect it through pride of intellect, or love of sin, or devotedness to worldly amusements; it may be, that you neglect it through prejudice, or superstition, or carelessness, or ignorance. These various causes (and others like them) of neglect, may render the guilt of neglecting it either greater or less; but they do not alter the fact that you neglect it. He who from whatever cause, by a multiplicity of cares, by exhausting duties, by having his time fully occupied in the world, or by any other means whatever, does in fact not become a penitent believer in Jesus Christ—he is neglecting this great salvation; because God has offered him these blessings in this way, and in this way only, and if he on any account preferring other blessings of a temporal kind does not secure these, then he is obviously neglecting the salvation that God has offered.

He, then, is chargeable with this neglect, whoever he be and whatever his profession of attachment to the doctrines of the Gospel, who is still without penitence, without belief in Christ, without supreme love to his Creator, without habitual subjection of heart to His will.

III. This being the nature of neglect, let me now, my brethren, call your attention, in the last place, to the guilt of neglecting this great salvation.

That guilt is clearly implied in the expression in our text, “How shall we escape” if we neglect it? “How shall we

escape?"—it evidently implies, that there is in it such a guilt as must provoke the severest punishment. The certainty of that punishment, as well as its character, I shall have to describe to you on other occasions; but let me now ask you, my dear hearers, each solemnly to consider what is the guilt of rejecting this salvation.

Here there are two kinds of guilt, with which I must charge each unconverted person here. You are, first, despising invaluable blessings offered to you by Divine mercy; and you are, secondly, I am sorry to say, guilty of the basest ingratitude to the Almighty God. These are the two kinds of guilt, which you manifest, in living in careless neglect of this great salvation.

In the first place, you despise these blessings. Heaven, and the pardon of your sins, and the renewal of your hearts, and the indwelling Spirit, the love of God, a holy and a blameless life, a glorious crown, an immortality of holiness and happiness—all this you despise. Deny not the charge, my dear hearers—because facts establish it. You may speak in high terms of the Gospel, you may speak of what God has done in Christ with much admiration; but facts prove, that every unconverted person here does despise these blessings. For if you do not despise them, why are they not yours? God would see you confessing your guilt, God would see you on your knees day by day, supplicating with an earnestness that should take no denial a part in the privileges of His children. But you are still not—you have never yet once been—earnestly and sincerely seeking to have His grace save you from the ruin you deserve; because He would have fulfilled His Word, and it would this day have been yours. As He says to parents with all their present infirmities, "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, much more will your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him"—had you asked, you would have found; had you ever been honestly desirous to be saved in God's appointed way from the power and from the penalty of sin by the work of the Redeemer and the grace of the Spirit, that

blessing would have been yours. But it is not yours; you are impenitent and obdurate still, and therefore never have sought this great salvation. And whatever may be the terms in which you *speak* of the Gospel, this condemning fact—the fact that you have some sin which you indulge, some worldly gaiety which you prefer, something which you love beyond these blessings—proves that you despise them; compared with the trifles of a day, with the objects of ordinary worldly cupidity, with that after which ungodly men strive sometimes with an admirable energy, you are contented to forego all the blessings of grace and of salvation, and *that* is to despise them. And do not think, that because sometimes you may be melted under the thought of your misery even to tears, and because sometimes you have uttered what seemed to be the cry of impassioned earnestness that you might be pardoned, therefore this is not to neglect them. So long as other blessings are sought more, and these blessings are not sought in the appointed way, it proves that you despise them. Now should you see one of your fellow-creatures, for some despicable indulgence, destroying health, reputation, and fortune, exposing his children to beggary and afflicting with permanent misery the companion of his days, whom he had vowed to love, honour, and cherish to the end, would you not say he was degraded and criminal? And that is *your* course, that is your choice—the choice of every one in this church, who, rejecting all those blessings that God has so freely and so graciously offered, prefers to them those things, which at best are the trifles of a day.

But, my brethren, I have a heavier charge to bring against you. It is evil enough to disregard these mercies, to pour contempt upon the favour of God, the purity of your nature, the fulfilment of the ends which God assigned you to fulfil—to disregard a heaven of perfect bliss and perfect holiness, and to choose all the opposites of these; this is already to be sufficiently degraded and sufficiently criminal. But every unconverted man, woman, and child in this con-

gregation to-day is also guilty of inconceivable and unutterable ingratitude towards God. Now consider whether it is not so, my dear hearers. God Almighty, as certainly as you and I breathe, is offering to you, through the inestimable gift of Christ, to pass by all your transgressions, to welcome you into His family, to make you His children, to give you a place in heaven—He whom you have infinitely wronged. And you despise that love; you disregard that offer; you will not be His children. God the Son, in infinite love, offers you still to be saved; He has died to rescue you, He bore what may save you from eternal sufferings, He placed Himself in your stead, He underwent the penalty due to your transgressions, He chose that you might be happy through His sorrows; every blessing you enjoy, and every blessing He offers, comes to you through His unknown anguish of heart. And when He, notwithstanding that you have disregarded Him, despised Him, never believed in Him, never trusted Him, now offers you to be saved through His love, you continue in that neglect. You do not now trust Him, you do not believe Him, you do not love Him, you do not serve Him, you do not honour Him in the world; but you live in the contrary to all these. You disbelieve, you disregard, you dishonour Him. Perhaps for your own sake—not His—you profess His name; but only to dishonour it by unchristian dispositions. You, called His disciples and seeming to be among His people, are living in disregard of His known will, are not imitating His spotless character, do not praise Him for all that He has done; and if ever you attempt to render praise because you are afraid of living without it, the praise dies on your lips, because your cold proud hearts belie it. God the Holy Spirit is showing infinite kindness, in that He is ready to dwell in your polluted hearts, hard as they are, rebellious as they have been; though you have offended God by the breach of every law, and by the indulgence of every disposition which He condemns and which is opposite to His own, yet is God the Holy

Spirit, as surely as we are gathered together this day, ready to dwell in your hearts, to restore you to purity and peace, to make you all that angels are, and give you a place among the blessed. And you despise it all. Is not this ingratitude that wants a name?—now thought little of in the world, but the judgment day will bring it out; and when you see what mercies you have rejected, you will then understand too what a love you have despised. And of this inconceivable ingratitude, what—what, my brethren, must be hereafter the result?

Remember, in that criminality you stand almost alone. You have a pre-eminent condemnation. Few of your fellow-creatures even share in that condemnation. The heathen has never heard of that Saviour whom you disregard. The Mahomedan, if he has heard of Him, has only seen His Gospel dishonoured by the false profession of the nominal Christians, who lead him to despise it. The Jew has been nursed in unbelief and ignorance, and has never been invited to the Gospel, by the persecution and contempt which have been unjustly heaped upon him. The Roman Catholic has been shut out from the Scriptures, and has never learnt from his childhood the free and full salvation, which there is in Jesus Christ; taught to depend on the interposition of the church and the intervention of other mediators, but not to cling solely to the cross of Christ. Nay, many a nominal Protestant has been nurtured also in ignorance and prejudice, has never from his childhood been urged to read the Scriptures, has not been in the habit of hearing the Gospel preached, has never known that there is such a salvation as that which the Gospel unfolds. All of them are criminal in their ignorance and in their opposition; but none so criminal as he, who with better means of information and more certain knowledge, has resisted all. And you, my dear hearers, know the way of salvation; the doctrines of the Gospel have been presented and proved to you; you have admitted them all; you admit them now; you know that man is corrupt and accursed; you know that Jesus Christ

is a Saviour from hell, you know that whosoever believes in Him is justified from all his sins, you know that there is a mighty Spirit ready to change the heart, and to bless those who commit themselves to His care; and notwithstanding all, you have to this day neglected all these mercies. You therefore stand alone in your guilt; and if the heathen, the Mahomedan, the Jew, the Roman Catholic, the prejudiced and self-righteous Protestant who has been nursed in ignorance and folly, shall be condemned when they come before their Maker, Monarch and Judge, what place must be reserved for every unconverted man, woman and child, that dies impenitent from this congregation?

Nay, nay, my friends, the very worst beings that are, have not this guilt. The devil, ruined as he is by his apostacy, has never repelled proffered mercy, has never rejected an offered Saviour, has never "done despite unto the Spirit of grace." His doom was sealed when he fell; and all the malice of his heart has grown up in a condition of final reprobation. But what has been *your* guilt?—beyond, in this respect beyond that of the fallen angels. Offered mercy has been neglected; a proffered Saviour has been rejected; and you have done—nay, *you do*—"despite unto the Spirit of grace."

Oh! my dear friends, let me entreat you to weigh these solemn truths. Another Sabbath God is mercifully affording to you; you have these hours consecrated by His appointment to Him, and by the consent of mankind you are capable of withdrawing from all the pleasures and all the business of life. Let me beg you to dwell upon these truths this day. Let me ask you by prayer to prepare your minds to listen in the evening to another statement—to learn the certainty of that condemnation, that must await those who are impenitent. Let

me beg you, my dear friends, to consider meanwhile the greatness of this salvation. Try to explore its magnitude, try to appreciate its riches, this day. Set before your minds the blessedness of being a Christian; consider what a mercy it would be to be saved everlastingly; think what a Saviour Christ is; say to yourselves, 'if that Redeemer were mine and I His disciple, what a change would pass upon my destiny, what a hope would come into my blighted heart!' Do not conceal from yourselves your neglect of Him; do not try to deceive yourselves; give yourselves on the contrary to the fullness of the conviction, that unless you embrace this salvation you must continue chargeable with this neglect—unless you are converted persons you must be living in the neglect of this great mercy, which God has offered you. And finally, dwell upon the guilt of this. Remember this awful fact—that you stand almost alone in it, and that it would have been better for you, when you come to your last hour, when you stand before your Judge, if you had known nothing of the way of righteousness, than to have been living in the rejection of this great salvation all your days. If it will be worse for Capernaum and Bethsaida at the last day, than even for the city of Sodom, because they heard the Saviour's words and saw His miracles, which the others did not, how much more awful must *your* end be, if after having heard that great salvation opened in all its parts and listened continually to the proclamation of it, you persevere in your rejection of it! And may God bless your meditations; and may God the Spirit draw you to secret prayer, and may God the Spirit teach you the blessedness of the children of God, and make you throughout this day seek, with an earnestness which perhaps may be your first step to eternal life, those blessings which He is so ready to bestow and you have so long undervalued.

SERMON VI.

THE CERTAINTY THAT PUNISHMENT IN ETERNITY AWAITS THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 15, 1839.

“ For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? ”
—Hebrews ii. 2, 3.

I HAVE endeavoured, my brethren, according to the help God afforded me, to lay before you something of the character of the sins of those, who as yet are impenitent—the criminality of their conduct—and then the additional guilt of rejecting that “great salvation,” which has been provided for them in the Gospel. I have endeavoured to show to the careless part of this congregation how great that salvation is, which God has offered to every sinner. I have endeavoured to show you clearly wherein consists the neglect which is spoken of in this passage, so that every one who is in fact neglecting it may know it ; I have shown you, that whatever may be a person's profession, if he does not so receive Christ Jesus as truly to love Him and habitually to serve Him, to follow (under the influence of that faith) godliness, and be led habitually to love and serve God through Jesus Christ, he falls short of the blessings which the Gospel brings with it, and *he* is therefore neglecting this great salvation. And I have endeavoured to depict the guilt of that neglect. And now I proceed to show, as far as I may be enabled, the certainty of that punishment, which awaits such neglect if persevered in.

It is painful to set before persons the true character of their guilt and danger ; but yet the pain which it occasions is much relieved, by the cheering hope that some at least (if not all) may by this, as by the instrument God is pleased to employ, be led to escape the condemnation their sins deserve, and to find refuge and peace in the only Saviour. With that view I proceed to lay before you this evening four great considerations, which seem to me to render it perfectly certain,

that one who lives and dies in the neglect of this great salvation must experience an awful punishment at the hands of God.

Those four considerations are these. The Word of God declares it. The attributes of God secure it. It is shown by the past judgments, which God has inflicted upon sin. And above all, it is demonstrated by the cross of Christ.

To those who will consider these things seriously, I am persuaded they may afford a proof of the coming vengeance due to sin, and which will be inflicted on account of it—a proof which may render every unconverted person certain, that remaining so he can no more preserve his soul from everlasting destruction, than he can preserve his body from putrefaction in the grave. The one is beforehand rendered by these considerations as certain as the other. And I pray God, that each careless and ungodly person in this congregation may believe it *in time !*

I: First, my brethren, the Word of God expressly declares that God will punish sinners.

Each impenitent person here is living in the habitual violation of the law of God ; his nature is essentially opposed to the perfections of his Creator ; he refuses to believe in Christ for the salvation of his soul, and instead of supremely loving Him he is alienated and indifferent. Is there any impenitent and unconverted person here, that does not know these things are so ? He is living in habitual violation of the laws of God ; his nature is opposed to the attributes of his Creator ; he is living in unbelief, and he is alienated and indifferent towards the

Redeemer. And for all these things, God has peremptorily declared that He will punish each impenitent sinner.

Men may trifle respecting sin now; but this is the decision of the Almighty respecting it. "He will render to every man according to his deeds; to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Nay, there is not any person who cherishes *one* habit of sin, who wilfully and avowedly breaks *one* law of God, who must not lie under his Maker's curse. "Cursed" (says the book of God) "is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And therefore, says the apostle, every one who is looking to justification by the works of the law must be an accursed creature; "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."

Every impenitent person here has a nature opposed to the attributes of God. His evil actions and habits spring from a corrupted heart; they come from a *nature* at enmity to God. And while he retains that corruption of heart, he must be exposed to his Maker's wrath. Ye are, says the apostle Paul, "by nature the children of wrath."

Every impenitent person here is living in constant unbelief; and for that the Word of God pronounces his doom. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." Every impenitent person in this congregation is now alienated and indifferent towards the Redeemer; and for that the Word of God declares he must be condemned. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema;" "Let him be an accursed thing," is the decision of God Almighty.

God has most mercifully given you, my impenitent hearers, these plain warnings, that while there is time you may be led to escape. Thousands have heard and believed them to their everlasting welfare; it has awoke them from the trance into which sin had plunged them, from false and fatal dreams of a happiness that never was to be realised, and they have sought happiness where

it was to be found. But there are thousands more, who, disbelieving and despising those warnings, are at this moment, while you and I are met in peace, proving by far other demonstration than that of words, that "heaven and earth may pass, but God's word can never pass away." Oh! that *you*, my impenitent hearers, may believe it *in time*!

II. But again; the attributes of God, His revealed perfections, no less certainly secure the punishment of the sinner hereafter.

Let me remind you, my brethren, that every sin which you or I have committed, has been committed against infinite obligations to love and serve God. I use the term *infinite*, in the sense of that to which we can assign no limit. In that sense every sin, of which we have been guilty, has been committed against infinite obligations to love and serve God, because it was committed against a God of infinite excellence, of infinite love, and whose bounties and mercies to us have been innumerable. The guilt of every such sin must be determined by the obligations we were under to the contrary; and if so, the guilt of each sin has been, in the same sense, infinite. It was worthy of a hatred, proportioned to its guilt. We see that as persons advance in holiness they increase in their conscious hatred of sin; if one of our fellow-creatures could become perfectly holy, he would have a perfect hatred of every act of sin; and those who are perfectly holy, who are perfect before God, do hate it thus; it is a part of the perfection of the saints and angels of a blessed world, that they do perfectly hate sin. How then must it be, how ought it to be, hated by the Almighty, whose infinite mind perceives it in all its iniquity and traces all its consequences? If there be an infinite guilt in every sin we commit, then is it a part of the perfection of God infinitely to hate sin. And if He hates it infinitely, he must always manifest that hatred. It would be doing himself dishonour, to allow His creatures to suppose that He hates it less than He does.

But how shall the Almighty manifest,

that He has an infinite hatred against every sin that you and I commit? If He passes it by, His word may declare that He hates it, but His government would declare that He hated it not. And He cannot—and He will not—pass it by. He has shown, and He will show, by his whole government, that sin is “the abominable thing that He hates.”

If the Almighty must thus manifest against each sin the infinite hatred He really feels towards it, can it be by any thing else than a punishment to us infinite? What less can show that God infinitely hates iniquity? And this is true of *one* sin. But *our* lives have been made up of sin; every thought, word and action in the unregenerate sinner is wholly sin; his heart, his life, his habits, his wishes, his words, are all sin; sins innumerable load the conscience of every unconverted man. And if the Almighty must manifest an infinite severity against each one sin, what must be the doom of so many?

God Almighty being holy, just and good, will show this infinite hatred of sin (as His good creatures do) not to some only, but to all. For if the sins of some were punished, but the sins of others passed by, then might the universe infer that the Almighty hated persons, and not sins. If He hates sin, He hates it everywhere; and He will not permit that dishonour to be done to Him, that His creatures can suppose that there is in Him anything like passion, or revenge, or caprice, or partiality. If He hates sin in one sinner He hates it in all; and if He manifests His hatred by the severity of His judgment against one, as certainly must He manifest it against all. And he changes not. For could He change, then if He might at one time pass by what at another He punishes, might not His creatures infer that He had been too severe, that there was some flaw in His government, that the severity from which He departs was not a just severity? This would be to do Him dishonour; and the universe must perish before God can do himself dishonour. It is of infinitely greater consequence that the Almighty should be perfectly exalted, than that the universe should *be*; and God, I

doubt not, (I may speak it with reverence,) would rather sweep away the universe, which in one moment He could repair by a fairer and more magnificent creation, than He would do to Himself by one of the transactions of His government the slightest dishonour; which would be to all creation an eternal curse.

God, from His own perfections, then, if He be God, holy, just, good and true—holiness, justice, goodness and truth binding Him infinitely to hate sin—must, in the exercise of those perfections, attach to it an infinitely severe condemnation.

Where is the sinner's hope, who lives in habitual violation of the will of his Creator? All those Divine perfections (the glory of His universe, the joy of His people, the safety of those who have fled to Christ for refuge,) are in array against that miserable soul, and secure his utter condemnation. All of them together proclaim, that He is the God “that will by no means clear the guilty.”

III. Again, my brethren; we have another and an independent proof that the impenitent sinner must look for a severe retribution when he comes before the judgment of his Maker, derived from the past judgments which he has inflicted on account of sin.

Often have individuals been made to experience the instant vengeance that God takes upon iniquity. Under the Mosaic law the provisions were exceedingly severe, to mark to that people that God abhors transgression. It was forbidden to light any fire upon the Sabbath day, and a disobedient Israelite went out to gather sticks for that purpose; brought before Moses, the legislator asked what must be done with the offender, and by the express command of God he was stoned to death without mercy. Another Israelite, contending with his enemy, in the struggle blasphemed the name of God; there was no palliation allowed on account of his irritation, He was brought for judgment, and by the express command of God he also was stoned. When the army of Israel tri-

umphed over Jericho, and one of the soldiers in that successful army concealed and retained for his use a part of the spoils, against the injunction of God, he was discovered, and in accordance with the will of God he and all his children were stoned to death. Nebuchadnezzar, in the height of his prosperity, manifested pride and exultation of heart at his own greatness; and the Lord struck him with insanity. Belshazzar, for greater profaneness, saw the mysterious hand-writing on the wall, which sentenced him to destruction; and he perished. Herod because he received the adulation of the people and gave not God the glory, was instantly eaten alive by worms. Ananias, when he would fain make a profession of devotedness to God and give up in fact a large portion of his property for religious objects, still, lying against the Holy Ghost, was instantly struck dead.

On many occasions God has manifested His anger against sin, towards multitudes at once. Pharaoh and his people opposed the Divine will concerning Israel, and would not let the bond slave go free; and their great river was for it turned into blood, their land was polluted by innumerable frogs, the dust of the earth became lice in all their territory, innumerable swarms of flies darkened their air, their cattle fell by the plague, boils broke out upon man and beast throughout the land of Egypt, a fierce hail devastated the herbage of the field, swarming locusts devoured what the hail had spared, impenetrable darkness for three days buried in its obscurity that guilty nation, in each family the first-born dropped down dead, and then, (when, only half conquered by the judgments of God, the monarch and his army pursued the escaping Israelites into the bosom of the sea) the suspended waters were commissioned to roll down upon the guilty host and bury them in its depths. Then when they proceeded on their appointed journey towards the promised land, an army of Amalek came out into the heart of the wilderness to fight with Israel; and for that opposition to the Divine will did God declare to Moses, "I will put out the

remembrance of Amalek from under heaven;" and many years afterwards was Saul and was David, commissioned to execute this vengeance of God upon their posterity. Sennacherib, among his many warlike expeditions, invaded Israel with a vast army, penetrated the heart of Judea, was approaching the city of Jerusalem, and there ventured on contemptuous language towards God; for which His angel was commissioned in one night to destroy a hundred and eighty-five thousand of his soldiers. Thus did God show the vengeance, which He takes upon His enemies.

But often too His people suffered under His righteous vengeance; and their history most awfully expounds that declaration of the prophet—"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." They had scarcely escaped from Egypt, when, making to themselves an idol at the base of that very mountain on the summit of which the glory of God was displayed, three thousand of them were destroyed for that offence. At Taberah they murmured that God did not give them flesh to eat in the wilderness; He gave it, but with it a pestilence that consumed multitudes. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, jealous of the authority which God had given to Moses and to Aaron, murmured against their leaders; and for it the earth yawned to devour them, and swallowed them, their children, their tents, and their property, and then closed over them for ever; and because the people, irritated by the death of their companions, complained again against Moses and Aaron, fourteen thousand of them for that sin died upon the spot. Again they murmured against the manna, which God gave them daily from heaven; and fiery serpents were commissioned to destroy "much people of them." When they came into the territory of Moab, untaught by all the disasters of the wilderness, they were seduced into idolatry; and for that offence twenty-four thousand of them were at once destroyed by the plague. On one occasion, when for their sins the Lord permitted His ark to be carried captive into the hands of

the enemies of Israel, it was miraculously restored to that land of Israel; but because the people of Bethshemesh curiously pried into that sacred ark, which God forbade to be inspected, fifty thousand of them were at once destroyed by His anger. And when, exulting in the prosperity which faith and holiness had accomplished in Israel, David in the pride of his heart numbered his people now rejoicing in peace and prosperity, for that pride of heart no less than seventy thousand of his people perished by the hand of God.

Are not these instances enough to show that God looks upon iniquity with abhorrence? Of many of these you will observe, that they seem to us most trivial offences; and the visitation that followed (which because it followed in fact, we know to have been consistent with all the revealed perfections of God) was awfully severe.

But there are some instances, in which His vengeance has assumed a more awful character still. We read that the men of Sodom were sinners exceedingly in the sight of God; and for this, that and three neighbouring cities were sentenced to destruction. Unwarned, and without exception, did the population of those four cities perish. The morning dawned upon the thronging multitudes of four flourishing cities, in a lovely vale; and the evening closed over a blackened and smoking furnace. Before that, a still more awful visitation had swept the human race from the world; and millions spread over the surface of the earth, offending against God, were all, men, women, and children, by His righteous vengeance involved in an awful destruction. The flood swept along their valleys, invaded every hill, climbed to every mountain top where the shrieking transgressors were seeking to escape the destruction that awaited them; and at last the earth destroyed manifested that God is a God, "that will by no means clear the guilty."

But, it seems to me, my brethren, that the miseries that have followed the single sin of Adam pass all these instances of righteous retribution. Only contemplate the scene, that Eden once presented. A

being, perfect in excellence, wisdom and joy; supremely, devotedly, loving his Creator. That being, admitting one temptation and guilty of one sin, driven from Eden, his nature polluted, his posterity ruined, the earth deluged by crime and sorrow; leaving to all after ages an awful memento, that God abhors iniquity. And death, sickness, pain, terror, sorrow, remorse; all the ills that afflict humanity, are so many loud voices proclaiming that God is a Holy Being, "that will by no means clear the guilty."

Once again; contemplate a more awful wreck, and a worst disaster yet. Think of those angelic beings, that once were in the presence of God, beloved and loving, holy, without stain of sin, happy beyond fear and beyond care, who seemed in their Maker's favour to have a shield that would secure them to eternity. Those angels admitted sin; those angels transgressed the will of God. And "keeping not their first estate" they are now "reserved under chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day;" as miserable as they are wicked, having no hope, visited by no mercy, reserved to an eternity of horror.

What God *has* done, why, why, sinners, should He not do again? How can you plead an exemption from the curse, that has rested upon so many? How can you hope, that with clearer light and greater privileges, persisting in the violation of your Maker's laws, you can ever escape the vengeance, which innumerable judgments have shown that He will take on sin? And if you think, that peradventure these instances do not apply to *your* condition or menace *you* with similar ruin, remember that God's Word has directed you to make this very use of all those judgments, and has warned you by them that you must expect to meet a similar doom. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an

overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." It is the very lesson, which God Almighty would teach you by these judgments, my dear hearers—that you must perish unless you be converted, that the judgment that has overtaken others must overtake you. And in all their doom, read, I beseech you, your own, unless grace shall bring you to repentance and to life.

IV. But there is another fact, still more awful than all—another argument still more potent than these. If every other proof that God will visit iniquity were lost, if His Word were silent, if we otherwise knew not His attributes, if there were no past judgments to point at, if the world were not scarred with His curse, still in the cross of Christ you would read a manifestation of the wrath of God against iniquity, which must reduce to hopelessness every considerate person still living in sin, or must reduce to silence at the last day every sinner that will cling to delusive hope.

For, my brethren, why did Christ die? You know that God is infinitely good; He has told us, that His nature is love; the infinite God "is love;" He has told us, that He does not "will the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live." Why, then—why are not sinners saved without an atonement? Because God *will* manifest how He hates iniquity; because He must—because holiness, justice, truth, goodness and mercy require that He must—show that He hates sin. For His Son Jesus Christ He has an infinite love; why did Jesus Christ die? why was not the sinner saved by the mediation of the Son of God without His death? Because the Lord would show by that act, that He has a hatred against sin. It is the only way in which we can account for this, that the Son of God has died in our stead. And if this be the real account of the cross given in His Word, this the moral character of that awful and unparalleled transaction, then I ask

you to consider what a proof God has given in that death, that He will punish impenitent, unbelieving sinners. Imagine any other consequences, if you please, following the transgressions of men, and they sink into dwarfish insignificance before this awful disclosure of the severity of God's justice. Imagine, for human sin, the whole world swept into annihilation; and what is that to Him, who could do it at a word, as by one act of His will it rose into existence, and who could replace the void, and not lose one among the number of His worshippers, nor anything of the majesty of His throne or the magnificence of His empire? Or imagine that sinners without exception should be condemned to everlasting sorrow, to a torture that knows no alleviation and can find no end—without one exception punished thus; what would that have cost the Deity? One act of His will, and in perfect justice, in consistency with infinite holiness and infinite goodness too, might that sentence have gone forth. These, great as they would be, are punishments following sin, not to be compared with this fact, that the Redeemer died.

The heathen only saw, in the death of Christ Jesus, the destruction of an unresisting and feeble Jew. The priests saw in it nothing but their triumph over Him, whom they hoped to prove a mischievous impostor. But angels, and devils, and believers, and God himself saw in that death the death of Him, the eternal Son of God, by whose Almighty Word the creation rose, by whom that creation is sustained—of infinite power, glory, wisdom and goodness; these beings saw Him suffering and dying in the hands of a furious populace and malignant priests, persecuted by almost all, deserted by the rest; they saw the Lord of Life expiring, the Author of happiness in agony, the most holy Creature enduring the doom of sin; they saw Him, who had assumed human nature, not for His sake, but for ours, the Substitute for sinners, in an agony that is unutterable. And tell me, what did they see then of the hatred that God bears to iniquity?

Now if God has shown in the cross the

infinite hatred that He bears to sin, more than by the destruction or damnation of a world, I ask every impenitent person here, whether he can hope that *he* shall escape the righteous judgment of God. What! did the Saviour, when He undertook to rescue us, not escape from the punishment due to our sins? why then should any impenitent person here escape? If the Almighty did not spare His own Son, why should He spare any obdurate sinner now? It is impossible—if there were no other fact in all the history of the past to tell you what doom you must anticipate, my careless and impenitent hearer, this cross of Christ would demonstrate beyond all question, if you only had the mind attentively to weigh its teaching, that it is impossible for you to escape.

By all these four considerations, and by others you may yourselves add to them, you may answer the question in our text, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" You will die, my hearers, you will die eternally, if you are not brought to Christ; because without Him you are destitute of an atonement. You can make none. I have shown you, that your innumerable sins deserve your Maker's wrath; I have shown you, that He declares that punishment shall be the doom of sin; and you, in rejecting Christ, are deprived of the only remedy which there is for the transgressor. If the sick man refuse the only medicine, that can master his menacing and growing disease, how can he escape? If the drowning man refuse to lay hold of the rope, which alone can save him from the mighty waters, how can he escape? And believe it, the sinner is seized and mastered by a worse disease, and is sinking in a profounder gulph; and if he refuse the medicine which the Gospel offers, and the preservation which he may find there, how can he escape? As certainly as the wounded Israelite died in the wilderness, if he refused to look at the brazen serpent, you, impenitent sinner, must die. As certainly as those, who in their scorn would not enter into the only ark of safety, perished when the flood at last desolated the

earth, must you sink beneath the flood of your Creator's anger, from which there is a refuge and you will not flee into it and be safe.

"He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." It is on him now; and as he rejects the only remedy, as he throws aside the only hope that God has offered him in the Gospel, that wrath which is on him now must abide for ever.

But more than this; by all these considerations, you are shown, my dear hearers, that if you are not in Christ you must perish, because you are dishonouring the only Saviour of men. It is enough that you have broken the law of God, that you are in habitual opposition to your Maker's will, that all your life is defiled by sin; but it is worse than all this, that you are rejecting His proffered mercy. The sins committed without knowing Christ, or had there been no Saviour, were enough to be your ruin; but imagine for a moment that they were all forgiven, that every sin was passed by, that the Lord remitted each, that He would never mention against you your innumerable transgressions, that the sin of an ungodly heart were purged away and that all your impenitence and obduracy were passed by—all other sins excepting this, that you reject the Lord Jesus Christ—that, that one sin, is enough to plunge each into irremediable destruction. And as certainly as the Word of God has been given to us, or God himself exists, *it will*. For if "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" In rejecting Christ, you are "trampling under foot" openly the blood of the Son of God. You are "counting a common thing" the sacrifice by which (professedly at least) you are consecrated to God; dedicated (by being baptized into the name of Christ) to the service of that

Saviour, and never renouncing that Christian name but holding it to this day, you are by that consecrated to the service of the Saviour—instead of which you are “counting His blood a common thing;” indifferent, alienated, unbelieving. And when the blessed Spirit of God would move over the darkness of your hearts and bid light shine, and would bless your depraved spirits with holiness and happiness, you scorn that too; you will not pray, you will not watch, you will not give up sin, you will not seek His favour. You reject all the love of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And how is it possible, that you can escape?

All the attributes of the infinite Being are against you. His holiness that cannot bear your iniquity, His justice which will do for ever that which is right, His truth which has already threatened you with destruction, His goodness which makes Him hate iniquity, that mercy to others which will lead Him to shield the universe against the consequences of sin suffered to pass with impunity—all, all are against you. God is to you “a consuming fire,” while He is to His people “a Sun and Shield;” and how—how, sinner! do you hope to escape? Can you elude the Omniscient? Can you wrestle with the Omnipotent? Can you change the Unchangeable? Can you outlive the Eternal? And if God Almighty be against you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the infinitely Merciful become your enemy (as alas! when you stand before Him in judgment, unpardoned and unchanged, He will)—“how shall you escape, having neglected so great a salvation?” If you saw the poor insect weaving its light web in the mouth of the cannon ere the explosion burst upon it, more reasonable were it to hope that by those light threads it could resist that explosion and drive back the ball into the place from whence it came than to hope that you can resist the awakened wrath of your avenging Creator by any fortitude, by any struggle, by any power which in combination with any numbers you can hope to exercise.

Oh! then, my dear hearers, in the name of God Almighty I ask you to take warning

by these considerations, which He in His providence has by me addressed to you—at least as far as they are agreeable to truth. I beseech you by all those explicit declarations of His word—by all those revealed perfections of His character—by all those awful judgments He has inflicted, by a deluged world, by flaming cities, by His own people deserted and their city sacked and ruined, by the death He has inflicted on numbers for their sins, by the doom of the fallen angels—but above all, by the cross of Christ, by the sight (presented to your memory at least) of the Son of God weary and wounded and buffeted and bruised and groaning, by the sight of Him who spread out His arms on the cross to show you that He never more would close them against the returning sinner, by the agony He so freely endured for you, by that obloquy to which he was exposed, by that anguish which made Him bow His head in death, by that piercing cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (“forsaking” Him in order that you might never be forsaken)—by all the love that passes knowledge, by all the agony that passes knowledge too, I beseech you to see that you *must perish* if you are not in Christ, and that you *may be saved* if you are believers in Him. From this moment, I ask every careless person here, as he values his soul, as he would not live to a moment when inexpressible remorse shall too late take possession of his whole being—I ask every unconverted sinner here, that he at once seek to escape from this “great” destruction. Oh! my dear hearers, it is certain it is as certain as you live, it is as certain as that we are met before God, it is as certain as there is a supreme Governor of the universe—you *must* come under condemnation. If there be a God, *you must*. And name no refuge in atheism; it will but deepen your doom. There is but one escape. There is none in reason; there is none in levity; there is none in unbelief. Every consideration condemns you; every hope of escape that you cherish will condemn you more; every method you devise either to solace your agitated spirit now or to seek to escape from the Divine wrath hereafter,

except the appointed one, will aggravate your doom. There is salvation in one way ; oh ! take it—take it from this night. It is by believing in the Son of God.

My hearers, believe in Him. Give your hearts to Christ. Give your lives and faculties to Christ. Give yourselves up to Christ without delay ; without hesitation ; without reserve ; with all your heart and soul. If you would stand before your Maker in peace, give yourselves up to Christ. And if still your hearts resist your happiness, your duty, your wisdom, the only way of escape from infinite wrath and infinite despair, then bow before God own the complete depravity of a heart, that no motives can subdue. Ask Him by His own mighty Spirit to burst through every bar, that now bolts your heart against Divine love. Ask Him to throw open the recesses of that heart

to Himself, to come in and dwell in that polluted prison-house, and turn it into the temple of His own holy presence. Tell Him that you wish at least that His mercy may save, that you own your ruin, that you feel your only hope is bound up in Christ. And if you have not relief to-night, and if you have not recovery to-morrow, and if still He should please that you should wait ere your spirit be set free and you know the light and the liberty and the strength and the holiness and the mercy of the Gospel, still wait upon that God, till He have mercy upon you, and instead of coming only under His awakened wrath you have found in Christ that “a Man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”

SERMON VII.

THE LAST JUDGMENT SET BEFORE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 22, 1839.

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”—Rev. xx. 11, 12.

As I would leave no argument unused which I can employ, to induce those among you, my dear hearers, who may have been living hitherto carelessly, to seek salvation in Christ Jesus, to consider it the great business of your lives, and never to rest till it is accomplished—fearing that there still remain many, who, however impressed by the solemn truths which have been brought before them, are yet unchanged, and therefore in a dangerous condition—I desire to bring another awful truth before you, that you may be induced to prepare to meet your Judge, when He shall come. This passage sets before us that future judgment, in which we all must stand before God; and it is in exact accordance with various other predictions of the same great event, which we find in the book of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in His own time (and how near that time may be, none of us can say,) will judge quick and dead according to the Gospel of God. He himself assured His disciples when He was upon earth, that He would thus come; “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son.” And His apostles contantly maintained the same great truth; they were sent to testify, that it is He, who has been ordained of God to judge the quick and the dead, and that the Lord hath “appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained.” That judgment the apostle here brings before our notice. He tells us of that second advent of the Redeemer—of the great assembly then gathered before His throne—and of the judgment which on that occasion will take place.

Let me beg each careless and impenitent person here, to receive this truth with great solemnity. I am sure it is calculated very much to awaken them to the necessity of preparing to meet the Saviour. And if God grant His blessing to that consideration, possibly there may be some, who through the influence of this truth may be led in fact to prepare.

Let me first call your attention to the predicted advent of our Lord. “I saw” (the apostle says) “a great white throne, and Him that sat on it; from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.”

Immediately after our Lord's ascension to glory, two of His angels were commissioned to announce His second advent to His disciples, who grieved as they saw Him taken from them into heaven. “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?” they said; “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” And this the apostles instantly proclaimed to the world—that the Lord Jesus should again descend. St. Paul, for instance, assured the Thessalonians, that “the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God.” He will not come unattended. A glorious and celestial pomp will attend Him on that occasion. “Behold,” says the apostle Jude, “the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which

ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." He comes, then, attended with innumerable angels, as He himself declared; "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." At that time too His redeemed people, who have been gathered into glory in past ages, will reappear with their risen Lord; "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Thus He will be attended by His holy angels and His redeemed people to this appointed judgment. At that time His voice shall summon the dead out of their graves to appear before Him too. This He assured us when He was on earth; "Marvel not" (He said) "at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." All men, the quick and the dead, shall stand before the Saviour then. "Behold," says the apostle St. John, "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him; and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so; Amen."

What a contrast, my brethren, beyond all expression, will there be between the glory of the Saviour then, and that obscurity and shame which He consented to endure during His last sufferings! They will see Him, who assisted in His persecution and who brought Him to death; but oh! what a different spectacle will then be presented to their sight! When He stood before them at the first, He was emaciated and weary and worn with anguish; but now His countenance will be "as the sun shineth in its strength." He comes no longer obscure, to be despised, persecuted, and condemned; but with that glory, with which He appeared before His disciples on the mount of transfiguration—with that splendour, surpassing the sun, which struck the persecutor Saul convicted and trembling at His feet—and with that glory, which made the beloved disciple in the isle of Patmos "fall at His feet as dead." He was then pronounced un-

fit to live; but now will every one acknowledge Him to be the Lord of life. When He stood before them then, it was to be blasphemed; but He comes now to be universally adored. Then, He was dragged before governors and princes in chains, as a criminal, to be judged and to be condemned; but now all the world will stand before His judgment seat, to be tried according to their works. Then, our Saviour seemed to be unresisting and feeble in the hands of His enemies; but He returns omnipotent to save or to destroy. Then His few and feeble followers, afraid of the persecution that would attend the confession of their faith, shrunk from Him in silence; but now He will be attended with innumerable angels and saints, who exult in His glory. Then He heard nothing but the execration of His enemies; now all will be silent and trembling before His bar. Then He bore His heavy cross to Golgotha; but now He is to sit on His "great white throne." Then He heard the shout of hatred—"Crucify Him, Crucify Him;" but now He will hear the Hosannas of that assembled multitude, when all who are redeemed and saved by Him will shout aloud—"Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb"—"Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever."

When that awful spectacle is presented, and the dead have assembled before the Lord (of all ages and of all generations), then as we are assured in our text, "the earth and the heavens must flee away" before the awful countenance of God incarnate. At that time (we are told by the apostle St. Peter) "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Perhaps it will rain down, from every point of the fiery concave, such a deluge as once pursued each fugitive in his last retreat, and left the earth a solitude; but it will be a deluge of water no more. Perhaps the fire, darting from every rent-up chasm of the rending and reeling earth, will then sur-

round each city and palace—all, men must admired and gloried in, being given to the universal flame. The earth, itself, it appears will be consumed, and the heavens pass away with a great noise, to make way for the new heavens and the new earth. So that there will remain nothing to gaze on, but that glittering throne—that vast assembly—that awful Judge.

Let us now consider of what that assembly also will be composed. Our text says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,"

When our Redeemer comes, He will bring before His bar all those sinners, that are then found living on the earth. This He has assured us, in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; "When the Son of man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory and before Him shall be gathered all nations." All, however ignorant or however enlightened, from every part of the habitable earth, shall then be summoned to His bar. But men of other generations too, even to the remotest antiquity, shall then have to undergo their judgment; for, as St. Paul has assured us, He will "judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom." Devils too—their malice defeated and their power crushed—shall undergo their just judgment in that day; for, as St. Jude assures us, "the angels, which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Thus all sinners will stand before Him—"the dead, small and great." No man through his insignificance overlooked, none spared for his greatness; all brought to one undistinguished level before their Almighty Judge.

Nay, brethren, *you and I* must be among them then. We "shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." We shall see in reality what the apostle saw only in vision. And when the heaven and the earth are passed, and when the throne of judgment is set and the books are opened, we shall each

of us, fixing our eyes on that one spectacle, say with him—"I see a great white throne, and Him that sits on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth have fled away; and I see the dead, small and great, standing before God."

But that is no idle pomp, no useless spectacle, be assured. It is the last scene of the history of this fallen earth—the only one (I verily believe) that has ever wanted in its allegiance to God, and which must on that account be judged. That day is the day of *judgment*. "The books" shall then "be opened"—the book of God's Word, the book of His memory (the "book of remembrance" as it is called in the prophet); and the "other book, which is the book of life," in which the Lord has written the names of those whom He has chosen; "and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books according to their works."

That judgment will be, as we are told, a righteous one; it will be to "render to every man according to his deeds." We are assured too, that it will be a most extensive scrutiny, which shall then take place. Actions will certainly be weighed, God has told us so repeatedly in His Word. But let us remember likewise, that then an account must be given for every idle word: so our Lord has solemnly declared, when on earth—"I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." That scrutiny will also reach the very thoughts of the heart; for the apostle Paul has thus exhorted us—"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." Even those thoughts that never appeared before men, that were written neither on paper nor on the countenance, that were never known, but were marked only by the omniscient God, shall then be brought out into judgment; "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish with-

out law, and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel." And if thus actions, words, thoughts however secret and unknown among men, are judged, so will He judge then every omission of duty, as well as every commission of sin; the judgment of the "unprofitable servant," charged with no offence, but with most criminal neglect, will be—"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The scrutiny of that day extends therefore to all the sins, of which man has ever been guilty in his own person, whether of commission or omission. And then he will have to answer, further, for all that he has either led others to do which is evil, or all the good he might have led them to do and did not.

The Judge, who will conduct that searching scrutiny is One, from whom nothing can be hidden, and from whose decision there can be no appeal. He is an omniscient Judge; who has noticed every sin committed, and from whose memory the most insignificant among them has not been effaced. He is a holy Judge; who weighs actions, not according to our fancy, but His own knowledge of their real criminality. He is a Judge, who is true to all the threatenings and all the promises of God; who will accomplish the one in the destruction of the condemned, and the other in the happiness of God's people. He is an almighty Judge; against whom there is no effectual opposition. He is an omnipresent Judge; from whom there can be no escape. He is an eternal Judge; whose power can never be exhausted. He is an unchangeable Judge; whose decrees can never be reversed. And when He calls you and me before Him in judgment, how different must then be the sentence pronounced on those who are His people, from that which *they* must undergo, who are numbered amongst His foes!

There will be a great separation take place then. Now the enemies of Christ and His friends are intermingled; they are

found in the same nation, the same province, the same city, the same congregation, perhaps the same pew; they are found in the members of the same household, brothers and sisters in the same family; now the wheat grows mingled with the tares, and now he who has not on the wedding garment sits down at the marriage supper, as if he should share in that heavenly feast. But when the Lord Jesus comes again, there will be a great separation. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left."

Thus separated, each one known and marked, they must receive a sentence, as exactly corresponding to their works.

Consider for a moment what will be the sentence then pronounced upon His own people. They will in that day be filled with exultation, I doubt not, before even their sentence is openly pronounced: for the Judge is their Redeemer, their Friend, who was when they were on earth their Advocate with the Father, in whom they were accustomed to trust, whose merit they ever pleaded, whom they believed in, confessed, followed, imitated, trusted, served and loved, and now He is to pronounce the sentence upon them as they stand, not trembling, but assured before His bar. If He is omniscient, He knows that His grace made them sincere. If He is infinitely holy, it is to love that purity to which His grace has restored them. If He is true, it is to fulfil every promise that He ever made to His believing people. If He is almighty, it is to execute the sentence of acquittal and of blessedness, which He pronounces upon them. And His eternity and His omnipresence, and His unchangeableness are the shield around them for ever, so that they can never again know evil. Consider what will and must be the sentence pronounced upon this happy

company, when the Lord shall at length come. They, when they were on earth, "sowed to the Spirit;" and according to His promise, they shall "of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Led by His grace, they did "by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality;" He promised them in so doing "eternal life," and that eternal life He will then bestow. When He was on earth He said, "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life;" they were led to believe, and that everlasting life shall now be theirs. He told them when on earth, "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven;" they did confess Him, knew Him to be the only Redeemer, maintained His doctrines, His laws, His cause before men, and now according to His promise they shall be confessed before God. When on earth they knew that they were His servants and subjects, that all that they had was His, and they therefore lived to do Him service and to use what they were and had according to His will; and He will now therefore say to each of them, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." When on earth, they were led by His grace supremely to love Him, to love Him so that they loved each other for His sake and did kindness to those whom they believed to be His disciples; and now He will therefore say to each—"Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungred and ye gave Me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me in, naked and ye clothed Me, I was sick and ye visited Me, I was in prison and ye came unto Me: verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Owned therefore as His disciples because they loved Him (the plain proof that they were His), He pronounces them blest for ever, and will admit them into His glorious presence.

This, brethren, will be the welcome of

His people. May you and I then be found amongst that happy number, upon whom this sentence of acquittal through His righteousness, and of blessedness through His merit, shall be pronounced!

But you, my dear hearer, whoever you may be, rich or poor, old or young, who are still impenitent and careless—you have been "sowing to the flesh;" you have been opposing the Gospel, or at least neglecting it; you have not believed in Christ, you have not trusted Him, you have not served Him, you have not loved Him; and therefore, when He comes again, what can you expect at His hands? He is omniscient, omnipresent, holy, true, almighty, eternal, unchangeable; and every one of those Divine perfections secures your ruin. Then, be assured, that all that you have ever done will pass in review before your Judge. Every sin you committed in thought word or deed—every most secret offence, which no eye saw, which man knew not, which you perhaps have overlooked or even forgotten—will all be brought out in that day. All that you neglected to do (and which because you knew it and did it not, "to you it was sin,") shall in that day be brought out to judgment. The influence that you exerted upon others for evil, and all that you neglected to exert upon them for good—every social duty disregarded, every social mischief wrought by you—must in that day be recalled. And then every aggravation of your offences will pass in review too; the mercies that never won you to gratitude, the faculties you never employed for your salvation, the opportunities of hearing and receiving knowledge which you wasted, the knowledge itself which you possessed and which never brought you to repentance, every conviction of sin you trifled with and stifled, every benefit which you should have used for your eternal welfare and did not—all these things will pass in review before your heart-searching Judge? And you cannot answer Him to "one charge of a thousand."

Alas! my dear hearers, still impenitent in the sight of the heart-searching God, how will you endure in that day when your

Judge shall pronounce His sentence upon you "according to your works?" You have "sowed to the flesh;" and according to His declaration, you must "of the flesh reap corruption." God, who declares that He will judge each according to his works, will therefore so judge *you*; and as you "have been contentious and did not obey the truth, but obeyed unrighteousness, He will render" (as He has declared) "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," upon you, and upon "every soul of man that doeth evil." You have not believed in Him; and He said, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" how can you escape that condemnation? He has said, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh;" *you are* ashamed of His Gospel, you do not maintain His honour, His cause, His authority in the world; and therefore when He comes, He will be ashamed of you. He has told you, that "whosoever shall deny Him before men, him will He also deny before His Father;" you do deny Him—by your works, if not by your language—and you must alas! be denied by Him when He comes. *Now* you are "serving divers lusts and passions," not Him; your property, your time, your faculties, are not employed to give Him glory; and when He comes again, He will therefore say, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness." You do not love Him now, you do not love His people, you do not for His sake (even if you do from natural affection) show His people kindness; and therefore, when He comes again, He will say—"Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred and ye gave Me no meat, I was thirsty and ye gave Me no drink, I was a stranger and ye took Me not in, naked and ye clothed Me not, sick and in prison and ye visited Me not; verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me." And because you have thus shown in your whole course, that you neither believed in Him, trusted Him, followed Him, served Him nor loved Him,

how can you, when He comes again, be acknowledged to be His disciples? You must be placed on the left hand; and you must receive that sentence, which all that condemned company must undergo.

Oh! my brethren, can your heart be strong, and will you endure that day, when you shall stand before this awful Judge? And remember, it is coming—coming speedily. Perhaps, like many, you would fain turn away from the importunate thought; but that is the very reason, brethren, why you should let the thought dwell constantly upon your hearts. To "love the Saviour's appearing" is the proof (as St. Paul says) that they who do so shall then have "a crown of righteousness;" but to dread His coming, to be unwilling to have that solemn scrutiny, not to like the thought of standing before your heart-searching Judge, is a painful proof, that when that day comes, should that day come speedily, you would be unprepared to meet your Judge. Let me therefore entreat you rather to dwell upon that awful thought. We shall all before long stand before our Judge, "to receive the things done in the body, according to that we have done, whether it be good or bad." We shall see that "great white throne;" we shall see that awful Sovereign and Judge; we shall see "the dead, small and great, stand before Him;" we shall see this earth in its universal conflagration; we shall see heaven and earth pass, and nothing remain but that awful spectacle of an assembled universe and that great central throne; we shall see it—we shall see it soon. All the thoughts of our hearts must then be passed in review before the Judge. My brethren, are we ready for it? If we knew that the Lord Jesus would come this very day, if we knew that ere the sun set again upon this earth we should stand before our Lord, should we "lift up our heads with joy, because our redemption was come?"

If not, and if you know you are unprepared now, do not, my dear hearers, live in that unprepared state any more. You know there is only one way, by which you can ever stand in peace before the Lord'

you must be "in Christ." And you know that there is no way by which that blessing can become yours, except by your obtaining a new heart through grace. You must be "renewed in the spirit of your minds." God Almighty must subdue that natural enmity, which still triumphs over all your better resolutions, and which still destroys every blossoming hope ; you must, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, come to Christ as your only Saviour, believe in Him as the only hope of a sinner ; you must renounce all the rebellion of your habits and your hearts ; you must be brought by grace to imitate Christ and serve Him on the earth ; you must obtain such views of His cross, of the redeeming love which He has manifested, that you may love Him in return, so love Him as to feel your hearts drawn to all His people as far as you know them to be such, and " by this must all men know you to be

His disciples, that you have love one to another"—that you may stand before Him in peace when He comes. There is a glorious reward prepared for those who are His ; there is an awful sentence to be pronounced upon His enemies. With God's help I will set these things too before you ; and I pray you to give yourselves to the investigation, to open your hearts to truth, to think now ere it comes of what awaits the wicked and of what will crown the life of the just, that when that Saviour comes, the sentence (however awful) which He will pronounce upon His foes may find you unappalled, and the sentence of unutterable bliss which shall then be pronounced upon His people may be pronounced upon you ; that you, my dear hearers, led by His goodness to flee from the wrath to come, may in that day know what it is to have had a Redeemer, and what by the grace of His Spirit to have been led to choose Him for your portion.

SERMON VIII.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LAST JUDGMENT TO THE CONVERTED
AND THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 22, 1839.

“When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations. And He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me. Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.”—Matt. xxv. 31—46.

COMPARED with that eternity into which we shall all enter, it is a very little while before our Redeemer will come thus to judgment. “Behold,” He said, eighteen hundred years since—“behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.” His coming is nearer still; and if, compared with the eternity to follow, it was then a speedy advent, how much more so now! And when He comes, there will be that separation of the good and of the evil, of which we have read in this passage; and that separation will be followed by a corresponding difference in the sentences of each.

The two classes, you observe by this passage, are formed of those who loved Christ and those who were indifferent to Him. Those who through faith loved Him, will be on His right hand; those who in unbelief disregarded Him, will be on His left.

Other things, no doubt, will be taken into account in that final judgment; but here this one principal point in the course and character of each is made prominent by our Saviour, as that which shall eventually decide the destinies of each. Let me beg you to bear this point in mind—that those upon whom the two different sentences are pronounced, are those who loved Christ and those who did not love Him; and though other things are worthy of the deepest consideration respecting our conduct and temper, at present let us limit our thoughts to this.

There are two sentences here described. The Lord Jesus will, when He comes again, say to those who did not love Him and who shall then be separated from the rest, “Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” And He will say to those who did love Him, and who are on His right hand, “Come, ye

blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

These two sentences pronounced upon believers and unbelievers, on those who loved Christ and on those who loved Him not, let us now proceed to examine. Let us consider them attentively; and especially let me beg those among you, who know that you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, or at least who ought to know it by the prevailing course of your lives and tempers—let me beseech *you* to consider the meaning and consequence of each of those sentences, which shall then be pronounced on those two classes.

It is a blessed welcome, that is then prepared for all, who are real believers. "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Each part of the sentence is full of promise.

At that day the Redeemer will say to His people, "Come." "Come!"—that is, He will call them to be for ever with Him where He is. In His last prayer He said, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory;" the day will now be come, when this shall be accomplished for them all. All who ever believed in Him and loved Him, all in this congregation who through grace believed and loved, will in that day hear Him say, "Come." He will invite them then to be in His presence, and to share in His glory for ever. The Saviour in whom they believed, and in whom they had learned to trust—that gracious Saviour who once atoned for them and was their Advocate with the Father, who bore with all their provocations and sent down to them His Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify and perfect them, who watched over them with more than a parent's tenderness and more than the faithfulness of a brother—that Saviour who has given them so many mercies even now in the time of their probation—will then invite them to be with Him for ever. And in His presence there will

be a joy proportioned to their excellence and proportioned to their gratitude. They will then understand and see His glory; they will then feel and estimate aright His love; and to be present with Him will be—Heaven.

But since He says to each "Come," therefore each in being admitted to His presence, is admitted into the society of all His redeemed people. Each Christian has therefore "come to mount Zion, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect;" associated for ever with all those who were saved by grace, with the best and holiest of all human beings. Heaven has been gathering into its ample space the best, the wisest, the most godly, the most holy, the most amiable of all human beings for centuries; and to that noble fellowship will each of the redeemed disciples of Christ be introduced. Conceive the joy of dwelling in a society, into which no one who is evil can be introduced—where there is no contention, no passion, no jealousy, no impurity, no ignorance and folly, no sighing and sorrowing any more; the company of those, whose minds are filled with intelligence and wisdom, whose hearts are glowing with all the holiest and best affections, who are perfectly disinterested and perfectly generous, whom God has made stainless in purity. And these will be united into one great family for ever.

And then, since our Saviour is in glory and reigns there, when He says to His people "Come," it will be to admit them into heaven itself—the place (wherever that may be) where God especially manifests His glory—that portion of His universe, in which all the greatest wonders and triumphs of wisdom, power, and love shall be displayed—a world, into which sorrow and sin can never enter.

Next, He will say to them—Come, "ye blessed of My Father." To be blessed is to be the object of His favour and love, and in receiving His favour and love to be perfectly happy. "Come, ye blessed of My Father." In those words we learn that the disciples of Christ will then be freed

for ever from all sorrow and from all sin. In that world to which they shall then be introduced, we read, "there shall be no more curse." We read, again, that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." Happy condition! If you and I are privileged to enter upon it, we shall have no more disappointment and fear, no more shame and remorse, no more contentions and jealousy, no more sickness and pain, no more weariness and fatigue, no more death; for the former things will have passed away. And with that exemption from all evil, let us remember we shall also, if we are Christ's, be introduced to the possession of all good. Imagine what must be the number and magnitude of the blessings of those, who are made perfect by grace, capable of the highest enjoyments, with whose glory and joy the glory and the joy of the Redeemer are identified (because it is for His sake that they receive them), and who, placed under the care of an omnipotent Parent, shall taste all that infinite love and almighty power can do to make them happy. Think how happy He may make each of His children, if He please. Think what a capacity of enjoying and enduring happiness, of bearing the "weight of glory," He can bestow upon each of His children, if He please. Think then that He loved them enough to give His own Son for their sake to die, and that He has made them absolutely perfect, and introduced them into His presence; and then imagine what will be the perfect joy of those, to whom Christ shall say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father."

The concluding words of that sentence also point to a triumphant blessedness; "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." God set His love on them from eternity. God has found them out in their ruined condition. He has blessed them by His Providence and by His Spirit. He has watched over them along their course. He has prepared for them a place in heaven; and He has prepared

them for it. And now they are to inherit it. "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" as the children of God, they shall be blessed for ever. We read in Scripture, that the disciples of Christ will "reign in life"—will "receive a crown of righteousness"—will "reign with Him"—will "reign for ever and ever;" all, expressions pointing out the triumphant blessedness, which will then be theirs. All conceivable accumulation of dignities, splendours, honours and enjoyments, making the proudest throne on earth look dim and low, will then be bestowed upon the redeemed disciples of Christ.

Oh! my brethren, may you and I share in that felicity. Let us now set our hearts on its attainment. It is but a little while, and it will be here. Let us seek it with all the faculties we possess; with all the intensity we can throw into any undertaking, let us seek the possession of these incomparable joys. Take care, my brethren, that when the Saviour comes again, we may each one hear this welcome—"Come, thou blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

But let us turn now to the sentence pronounced upon the other class. "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

A gloomy prospect, set before every soul that dies without grace! Unconverted and impenitent hearers, listen to that sentence again, as belonging to each. When the Son of God shall come again in His glory, He will say to thee—to *thee*, impenitent and unconverted sinner!—"Depart, thou cursed being, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And if ever you used thought at all, if ever in the course of your brief existence you have been brought to seriousness of mind, let me beseech you now solemnly to consider whether you are prepared to bear this awful judgment.

Woe to you, my poor fellow-sinner, if you die without God's grace; for you will then hear the Almighty Judge say, "Depart." "Depart!" And there is hell in

that one sentence. "Depart!" You never believed in Him, you never loved Him, you never trusted Him, you never sought His favour, you never lived for His glory, you never used your faculties to do Him service, you never confessed Him before men; what, when the judgment comes, will you have to do with Christ? You must then, if not now, be self-condemned, and feel that it will be but just to you, if He says, "Depart." "Depart" from the only Being, that could or would redeem a lost and ruined sinner. "Depart" from the only Mediator between God and man. "Depart" from the only source of grace and peace. "Depart" from that generous, patient, merciful, loving Saviour, who a thousand times invited you by His Word and by His providence, saying, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you peace." "Depart" from Him who said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" the "Friend of publicans and sinners," the gracious Saviour who never refused one returning and repentant rebel. "Depart" from Him, who will be a Saviour no more—whose mercy is now turned into judgment. "Depart" from Him, whom you chose to be separated from while you lived, and from whom you must be separated now. You meant to live without Him for a time; and now—"depart" from Him for ever.

Woe to you, my poor fellow-sinner, when that day comes; for you will hear your Judge say then—"Depart, accursed." To be accursed is to be the object of the abhorrence and of the wrath of God, and to experience that punishment which His abhorrence and His wrath insure. He has pronounced that curse on all who break His law—"Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them;" and you have broken that law, habitually, wilfully, allowedly. He has pronounced a curse upon as many as still perversely cling to self-righteousness and do not simply trust in the Redeemer—"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and you have no better trust to this very day, than

your own righteousness. He has pronounced a curse upon him, who lives and dies without loving Christ—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema;" and your heart is alienated and hard to this hour. And therefore that curse rests upon you: dying as you are, you must become the object of the Divine abhorrence. He said to Israel of old, when He charged them to be faithful to Him, and told them how He would regard them if they departed from their allegiance—"If ye will not for all this hearken unto Me, but walk contrary unto Me, then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury, and I even I will chastise you seven times for your sins, and I will cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and My soul shall *abhor you*." That is, to be "accursed"—to be the object of God's abhorrence, loathed as a hateful thing, altogether the object of the Divine displeasure, in which He can find nothing that His soul does not detest. It is to lie under His wrath. We are by nature, by this corrupted depraved nature—we are "by nature the children of wrath;" that is, devoted to the just and holy wrath of God. What must be your condition then, when the Saviour of men shall pronounce you to be thus "accursed?" "It is a fearful thing," says St. Paul, "to fall into the hands of the living God." "It is a fearful thing," for a creature to be accursed by the Creator; to be cursed by the only Preserver of existence, by the only Fountain of joy; to be cursed by the universal Sovereign, and the final and supreme Judge; to be cursed by a Being, that is almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, eternal and unchanging. What—what, my brethren, must be the misery, which such a curse entails? Where can you fly from it? How can you endure it, if it comes upon you? The mind of an infinite God will never for a moment be separated from you in that accursed condition, and your mind can never for a moment forget Him. Here a thousand trifles may occupy your thoughts and ingross your affections; they will be all *gone* there. For there is no blessing left, to a being that is accursed. Where can the blessing come

from ? Not from Him ; He curses you. Not from His creatures with His consent ; for that would be *His* blessing. Not from His creatures against His will ; for then He were not omniscient and almighty. Where can your blessing come from, if you are accursed of God ? It involves a loss of all good for ever. All spiritual good from that moment fails you. There is no Saviour—no mercy—no grace—no pity—no hope—no peace—when you shall lie under God's curse. And all natural good must cease too. Think you, He will renew the benefits, you have so vilely abused ? Think you, that He will give you again opportunities of happiness you chose to fling away ? In that world there is no more music and revelry, no more business and pleasure, no more "buying and selling and getting gain," no more literature and refinement of manners, no more pleasant friendships ; and all the occupations, which delight men now and charm them till they forget the eternity that God offers to them—all this must for ever be passed from those, who lie under God's curse. That world you go to, will be an accursed world. Each there is cursed. It is a cursed soul in a cursed society and a cursed region. Every object accursed. Every moment of your being will be under that curse. Your whole existence will be plunged into that infinite and eternal curse. Never, never can you be divorced from the thought of an avenging Being, that has cursed you—and curses you still. And how can you possibly bear such a condition as this ?

Woe to you, my poor fellow-sinner, if you do not seek and find God's grace ; for He will sentence you then to be tormented in body and in soul for ever. The sentence to be pronounced is :—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Let me ask you to follow me through some of those fearful passages, with which God's word abounds, to show you what is that torture of body and of soul, which a condemned sinner must expect to endure. It will be a torture of body, as well as of soul. For our Saviour thus has charged upon us to mortify every sinful disposition ; "If thy right eye offend

thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee ; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Again, He charged upon His disciples, not to fear a dying creature in comparison of God, in the following terms ; "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather, fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." And what else can be meant by those unspeakably terrific images, which it has pleased Infinite Wisdom to employ, to pourtray the future condition of those, that die impenitent and unforgiven ? "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." "The fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." St. John says of our Saviour—"Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into His garner, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." He himself has told us, that the tares and the wheat shall grow together till the harvest ; but in the time of the harvest, the tares shall be "gathered into bundles to be burned." He has told us too, that if any one is a fruitless bough, though professing to belong to Christ and found in His professing church, that bough shall be severed, and the only lot that awaits it is to be "cast into the fire and to be burned." He has told us, again, employing another image (perhaps yet more terrific than these)—"Whosoever shall fall upon this stone" (meaning Himself) "shall be broken ;" whoever doubts, for a while disbelieves, and shrinks from the Gospel, and delays coming

to Christ, shall on that account receive severe trials; "but on whomsoever it shall fall" as an impenitent unbeliever, "it will grind him to powder." Again (to ask your attention to only one more passage, as awful as those which I have cited), "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Now weigh all these passages; put them together, and ask yourselves what is the least that they can mean. Remember these expressions have been selected by Infinite Wisdom—that *He* has pronounced them, who knows the whole of the future and who has not used one word in vain; and what does *He* mean to announce to sinners in this world by these terrific passages?

They seem to me to assure us, that the torment of sinners in that state will be universal. For what else can be meant by being plunged into "a lake of fire," than that every part of the being is immersed in torment—body and soul? And what part of the chaff is not exposed to the "unquenchable fire?" What is it to be "everlastingly destroyed," if not to have the whole being suffering under the wrath of God? Memory will then torture the unhappy soul with the recollection of all that is lost and all that might have been attained; the fancy will torture the soul with the anticipation of worse, for ever and for ever; the understanding will torture the soul, by comprehending much of what God is and of the justice of the sentence then pronounced; conscience will torture the soul, by making the sinner feel, in the midst of the ravings of despair and blasphemy, that God has treated him rightly. Every part of the soul will be an inlet then to misery. Body and soul will be tortured under the Infinite Avenger.

What do these passages tell you, my careless hearers, but that that punishment will be absolutely intolerable? A man can defy torment here; I believe that a courageous man may defy any torment here; be-

cause, when torture passes a certain intensity, the body escapes by dying. And criminals and slaves and martyrs have in numbers shown that the mind was unconquered by the agony that destroyed the body, and so escaped. But then the mind remained unconquered because the body died. But if the body be immortal—but if the body be capable of enduring any anguish—then can the soul remain unconquered in its torture? These passages tell us, it can *not*. The body will live; and the soul will be tortured—absolutely *crushed*—under the weight of the insupportable wrath of God. To be plunged into "a lake of fire;" can the soul bear it? Could the body bear that torture? and if not, does it not mean that it is a torture insupportable to the soul? Could the chaff bear "unquenchable fire?" and can the soul bear a torture analogous to it? What less is meant by lying under the wrath of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, as the insect crushed under the fallen rock? "It will *grind him to powder*." What else is meant by being "punished with *everlasting destruction*?" Conceive an insect crushed under a fallen rock, but retaining still consciousness and feeling. It is the idea of a lost soul—in which there is no fortitude, no strength, no consolation, no hope, and yet the being cannot die. Oh! brethren, do not meet it. Do not try in your own persons what is meant by being like chaff in the "unquenchable fire"—like an insect under the fallen rock—like a creature destroyed, and yet existing. "Everlasting destruction!" If there were any strength to bear, if there were any consolation left, if there were any hope at any period of time of living into bliss, then you could not say the being was destroyed; all this therefore is gone, and the soul must sink down unresisting under an insupportable weight of wrath. Conceive that there was only some comparatively trivial punishment; imagine that any one of us were sentenced, through the poor remainder of our existence on earth, to lie on a bed of fire in some such furnace as that contrived by the furious tyranny of Nebuchadnezzar for the three youths that opposed his arbi-

trary decisions ; imagine that only for the rest of time we were sentenced to lie upon that bed of fire—not to escape, as the martyr, by dying, but to suffer on—and that we knew it was to begin this night ; how would the spirit sink (of most at least) under a disaster felt to be insupportable ! But what is this to the wrath of God, who can inflict as much of agony as He will—who can give to the creature as much strength to bear as He will—who can make it endure, and yet take away all courage, all fortitude, all hope—*crush* it, while it lives ?

And do you think, my brethren, that God will not do so ? He is “holy and just and good ;” and holiness, justice, and goodness demand that He shall let the universe at length see what an infinite enormity there is in a creature disregarding His will, trifling with His love, scorning His invitations ? Do you think it seems too hard for a creature to bear ? Has not the Lord Jesus Christ died on account of sin ? *There* was a penalty for sin, which makes every thing else seem small. The eternal ruin I describe, though it were depicted in language far more emphatic, could not equal this—that God’s own Son has died. And if you have seen Christ die that God might testify His hatred of sin, think not that any endurance is too heavy or more than it deserves, for an impenitent rebel against the majesty of God, a creature alienated from infinite goodness, a creature disregarding infinite obligations to love and serve God.

Alas ! my brethren, this is not all that Christ will declare to be the doom of the wretched transgressor at that day ; He will add—“Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

A dismal society ! yet it is all that the sinner can expect, after he has laughed and trifled through this solemn and brief existence. A dismal company ! to be shut up with those, absolutely depraved, unutterably malignant ! Yet this is the only prospect before every sinner here. In that “lake of fire” where the sinner shall be plunged, we read, the devil also (now their tempter, and then their torturer,) shall be plunged too. Shut out from the presence of good, with

all that was most base, most malignant, most revolting, most estranged from virtue, most dead to all generosity, most utterly hateful here ; shut up in that society for ever—to torture and be tortured—to shrink from solitude because there is an Almighty Avenger there, and then in society only to listen to mingled groans and blasphemies—to witness the ravings of useless remorse, and to see the malignity of beings that can only hate ! Alas ! alas ! I know not what better than this is before each man, woman, and child in this congregation, that dies impenitent.

My brethren, let me entreat you in God’s name, not to disbelieve this ; because you will disbelieve it against evidence. God has spoken it ; and He will make it true. If you disbelieve (as possibly some one here may), you disbelieve—why ? not because God has not said so, for you can see that He has explicitly declared it ; not because the holiest and most enlightened upon earth do not believe it—ask them and they will tell you they do ; why will you disbelieve (if you *can* disbelieve) ? Because you are familiar with sin, and it has lost its atrocity in your sight ; because you love it, and it seems fair ; because your heart is alienated from God, and you cannot feel His goodness ; because you never weigh, with a caudid unbiassed mind, the obligations under which you are laid to love Him. *The heart* is the source of the unbelief, if you disbelieve ; and therefore unbelief will be your ruin. “He that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” If you do not see that in your condition you deserve eternal ruin, a ruin which can only be taken away by Jesus Christ, it is because you are living in total alienation from God ; and that unbelief must be your destruction.

Disbelieve it not, my hearers ; because, if you do, that disbelief will seal your doom. It may prevent you from praying, it may hinder you quitting your sins ; but it never can serve as an excuse, when you stand before God. If the murderer says that he doubted whether the law would visit murder, is he the less punished for that crime ?

And though you, against all that God has said, choose to doubt whether a punishment like this shall be inflicted, the law of God will take its course.

Do not say, 'This is too hard for one, who has not done so very wrong, and I cannot think a merciful God will inflict all this awful penalty *on me*.' Alas! my brethren, you cannot show reason why He should not. As you disregard Him, he may disregard you. As you are alienated against Him, He ought to be alienated against you. And *He will*. And to have the wrath, the displeasure of an infinite God, *must* secure some misery like this.

Disbelieve it not, my hearers, or you will one day prove its truth by experience. Unbelief will only hasten and aggravate your doom. You may not believe now; but for that unbelief you will *feel*. And then, then alas! it is too late to find out that God's Word must stand.

Do not, my dear hearers, say, that if this belongs to others, it does not belong to you. No doubt each sin shall have its proper punishment; no doubt in the eternal world there will be a nice discrimination between character and character; but simple unbelief, the simple want of love to the Lord Jesus Christ is that which shall bring *this* sentence, and therefore it belongs to you, whoever you are, if unchanged by grace. If I address any here, that are immoral, profane, openly ungodly, living to do mischief in the world, alas! their doom will be heavier yet than that of others; but you, my dear hearers, who are moral and upright and generous and gentle, but who are still unbelievers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have never been led by grace so to believe in Him that you love Him—I tell you in the name of God, this lies before you. It is *to you*, this word is addressed now; upon *you*, unless you change, that sentence must be pronounced, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Do not think, my dear hearer, you can possibly escape. How should you escape? For I ask you, Can you deceive the Omniscient, or make Him suppose that you are

other than you are? Can you overcome the Supreme? Can you resist the Almighty? Can you flatter Him into a milder sentence? Can you hope to make atonement in the unseen world? Can you expect that others should do this for you? Do you hope to be overlooked among the multitude of transgressors? Then He were not omniscient. Do you think that He can change? He were not then unchangeable. Do not suppose that in that world you can possibly hope to mitigate His anger; for "God is not a man that He should lie, nor the Son of Man that He should repent." There is no passion, no cruelty in His sentence; else it might be changed. A man might change; but this comes from infinite wisdom, holiness, goodness—in accordance with perfect love; and you will understand it then, though you may disbelieve it now. And do not hope that you can outlive this awful sentence, and that there comes some blessed time of rest afterwards. Oh! brethren, we can find no sentence in the Book of God to give us that hope. I shall have to bring that awful thought before you; we can find no word to give you the hope that you can outlive that sentence, if it is once pronounced upon you. It lasts for millions of ages; it lasts *for ever!*

Oh! my brethren, I beseech you, do not with your eyes open rush upon this doom. Do not let the thought of it pass from you. Would to God it might be present with you in every waking hour, till you come to Christ. Forget it! go on and live quietly in your sins! laugh on amid the amusements of life, or occupy your whole soul with its cares!—and where then is the hope for you in eternity? No; fasten it to your hearts; let the thought of this awful sentence, this doom of the transgressor, be deeply buried in your hearts, never more to be removed till it compels you to come to Christ. For if you believe it all and think on it constantly, I trust that God will so bless it to your souls, that it shall sweep away all the obstacles to your salvation, that you shall reject every bribe that sin offers, and brave all the scorn and contempt which a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ may

meet with here, that every hindrance may seem to you as the ropes that bound the arms of Samson, from which he broke as from a thread, and that you may rise from that lethargy and death-like sleep into which sin has plunged you, to seek an interest in the Son of God. Oh! that God himself, the only Being that can change the obdurate heart of man, may thus work effectually *in you*. Often as you have resisted appeals, you may resist them still; the voice of man may reach your ears, but it cannot reach your mailed and steeled hearts; God only can do that. And may He, while I tell you of that doom which certainly awaits the ungodly, so penetrate those hearts, that whether you be old or young, whether you be immersed in the pleasures or in the occupations of this world, you may feel that Christ Jesus is an absolute necessity to your souls—feel it an overwhelming need that you become real Christians—and not content with what is called religion in the world, seek to find in the grace of Christ your security and your peace. Oh! brethren, dwell on these thoughts, I beseech you. Let them carry you instantly to prayer. Do not let them depart from you till they have brought you to Christ—till you feel conscious that through His grace you love Him, you have chosen Him, you are ready to serve Him all your days, you will confess Him before a hostile world, you are ready to live to His glory—till you feel that you love Him with a surpassing love, and could trust a *thousand* souls (if you had them) to all eternity to His faithful keeping. God himself grant it to every unregenerate soul here; that all these awful curses may be turned into blessings, and that you may feel it a mercy and a joy, that you learned in time that there was such a contrast between the doom of the unbeliever and the portion of the believer in Jesus.

SERMON IX.

THE ETERNITY OF THE DOOM PREPARED FOR THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPT. 29, 1839.

“*And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal.*”
—Matthew xxv. 46.

WHENEVER an ungodly person is assured, that if he is not converted he must be eternally miserable, he is strongly disposed to disbelieve that statement. Deeming that he does not deserve such a punishment, he cannot think that God will actually inflict it. For this he can allege various reasons; and these serve to convince him, either that (remaining as he is) he will not be punished at all hereafter, or that he must look for annihilation and thus will cease to suffer, or else that after having suffered a just punishment for his ungodliness he will at length be restored to the Divine favour.

I wish, my brethren, I could see proof that either of these suppositions were true and right and agreeable to the will of God. For there is no charm in the idea of a fellow-creature suffering for ever and for ever; it would be most agreeable to the feelings, if it *could* be shown that there is no such gloomy prospect before sinners. But if all this is imagination, and the truth is a great deal too plain to be mistaken that sinners must suffer in the next world eternal misery, it is far better to ascertain the truth now, than when it is too late. I wish that there were no such thing as sickness and sorrow in the earth; I wish I could say that there were not in this city any that were suffering from the want of clothing or of food, that there were none sick, that there were none distracted with sorrow; but to deny these things would not give them the least respite from suffering, and might prevent others from attempting to relieve them. And if in like manner there is too sure evidence that the sinner will eternally suffer, to deny its probability may hinder others attempting his conversion and may encourage him in sin, but it will not diminish in the least the amount of that suffering to which he is hastening. On the contrary, to be assured of it, to be

perfectly convinced that such is the only fate reserved for him (remaining impenitent), may awaken many a sinner now careless and indifferent to a concern for his soul, and may lead him to secure (while it is possible) that eternal life, which Christ died to give to His believing people.

On this account I now assure you, my fellow-sinner, whoever in this congregation remains still impenitent and unbelieving, that you have nothing to look for but eternal misery; and all the arguments which you urge, to persuade yourself that you have not so fearful a doom to expect, are wholly delusive. I tell you on the authority of God, I tell you on the most certain evidence, that you (remaining unconverted) have nothing to look for, after this short life is past, but a misery which is eternal.

You ought not, my unconverted hearer, to need any other proof of that, than the words of this one passage of Scripture. They ought to be quite enough to convince you, that you have nothing better to look for, remaining as you are. “*These shall go away into everlasting punishment.*” But because the doctrine is of extreme importance—because sinners are so much disposed, if possible, to evade the proof of it—I shall proceed to examine it more particularly. I will first answer those objections to it, which may arise in the minds of persons in this congregation, who are still unconverted; and I will then show you the scriptural evidence, which there is, to establish this truth; praying God that He may open your minds to conviction, that He may fasten there for ever the truth of which you may be convinced, and lead you to seek, as becomes those who are rational and accountable beings, for an escape from this dreadful end.

First; among the various objections,

which possibly you, my fellow-sinner may urge to the idea that you shall meet eternal misery hereafter, may be this—that you think your sins are not great enough to deserve it.

But let me remind you, that the Almighty may judge of sin very differently from what you judge of it. You are still unholy, and therefore cannot see the deformity of unholiness; but God is infinitely holy, and therefore sees it. You love your habits of sin; but God infinitely hates them; you cannot therefore condemn them, but He therefore does. You have very imperfect views of the obligations under which you are laid to serve and love God, because you are alienated from Him by nature; but God estimates those obligations aright; you see only the present; but the Almighty can trace the consequences of each sin through long years, nay, ages to come, and therefore judges of those sins far otherwise than you do. And as I have shown you already that the guilt of sin is to our understandings infinite, and that it therefore deserves a punishment which is corresponding to itself—and as the sinner is finite in capacity, and the only infinite punishment which he can suffer is an eternal one—he must therefore in consequence of the desert of his sins look for a punishment which is eternal. If a single habit of iniquity brings a person under the Divine curse, as the Word of God assures us when it says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” what think you must be the desert of those innumerable sins in thought, word, and deed, which have defiled your own existence?

Perhaps you may say, that it is inconceivable, that sins which have been committed through a few days or years can deserve a punishment so boundless and endless; to punish the sinner of a day with eternal ages of anguish, seems to you too great to be just. But let me ask you whether we are accustomed upon earth, to measure the punishment of offences by the time which they took in the commission. A man may spend a week or a month in writ-

ing some foolish libel; and another may spend five minutes in murdering his child; do you think that the libeller deserves the same punishment as the murderer, though the one spent but five minutes on his crime and the other perhaps as many weeks? The patriarch Abraham, we have reason to believe, continued for some time in a prevarication respecting his wife; and the apostate Judas originated and matured his treachery, and brought it to its close, in a few days; who will suppose, that the patriarch Abraham deserved the same doom with the traitor Judas?—yet the one was long in the commission of his sin, and the other committed his speedily. In fact the time which is taken in the commission of sin, never determines its punishment; it is its atrocity, by which that is determined; and as we have seen that the guilt of transient sins may be infinite, therefore the punishment of those transitory sins may be eternal. But in truth, the whole supposition is mistake. The sin to be punished is *not* transitory, but as eternal as the punishment itself. For when the sinner reaches that unseen world, destitute of all good example, without all means of grace, shut up in a place of torture, in the presence of an avenging Deity, he will sin on; he will sin worse than before. And therefore, if sin is perpetually renewed, the desert of punishment must be perpetually increasing; and to hope that he shall not suffer eternally because he only sinned through the few years of life, is to rest on a mere delusion.

But perhaps, my unconverted hearer, you may think that your frailty will be an excuse when you stand before your Judge, and that considering under how strong inducements you were placed to sin and your little strength to resist them, He will not be “extreme to mark” what you have done amiss.

But let me ask you, what is the character of that frailty. Does it mean any thing more than this—that you neither believe God, nor love Him? For if you did believe in God and if you did love Him, would you be frail then? When Moses believed God

so much, that he was willing to renounce the pleasures of a court and the prospects of a prince to "endure affliction with the people of God," "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt," was he infirm—was he frail? And when Abraham so believed God, that under circumstances of unparalleled trial he did not for a moment hesitate to offer up in sacrifice to God his only and well-beloved son, did he manifest frailty? And when Noah, amidst the scorn of a whole world, persevered for a hundred and twenty years in declaring that the deluge was coming, and in preparing at an enormous sacrifice of time and property that great ark which was to save his family, was he frail? Faith, if it were in lively exercise would accomplish in each one here what it wrought in them. It has just the same power to make strong and steadfast in duty now, as it had then. And therefore if any one cannot sacrifice sin as Moses did, and cannot give up the heart and life and all to God as Abraham did, and cannot endure the ridicule and scorn of the world as Noah did, it is because they have not the faith of Moses and of Abraham and of Noah? And do you conceive that the absence of that faith will be a justification for sin? Who amongst us would venture to plead, before his omniscient Judge, when he comes to take his last trial before Him—'I did not believe Thee, and I would not love Thee; therefore I trampled on Thy laws, defied Thy wrath, and trifled with Thy threatenings; and now therefore forgive me?' Do you conceive that such a plea as that will be then of avail, when it can be said in return—'Why did you not believe? why did you not love; why was all the mercy, with which you were surrounded throughout your life by the goodness of God, unable to draw that revolted heart back again to its allegiance?'

Perhaps you may say, that though you may deserve even eternal misery, yet God is far too merciful to inflict it—that He pities your misery, if He hates your sin—and you cannot conceive, that God, who has given

in His Word such descriptions of His abundant mercy, can sentence you to be eternally miserable.

The mercy of God is indeed unspeakable. Good proof has every sinner here received of it through all his days. He has given you many hours of happiness; He has sent a Saviour to rescue you from misery; He has clearly pointed out to you the road to happiness; and notwithstanding all your long and desperate rebellion, He is this day as ready to receive, pardon and bless you, as when you first entered on your course of sin. He is merciful beyond all expression. But be sure of this—it is not a weak and a foolish mercy, that cannot exercise a just severity when that severity is required. He has Himself assured you of it; in a passage in which He dwells upon His own compassion and kindness, He assures you that you must not expect from Him a mercy that is weak and foolish; "The Lord passed by before Moses and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." And therefore to hope in a mercy other than that which God has offered to you, in another way and upon other terms, is only to nourish a hope that must disappoint you as the rest.

God is so merciful, that at this day He offers you a full and a free forgiveness, a perfect and everlasting salvation, in His Son; but if you reject that salvation, and live and die impenitent, my unconverted hearer, you must look for justice, and not for mercy. Why else did the old world perish? Why else did Sodom and Gomorrah burn? Why else was Pharaoh drowned in the depths of the sea? Why else did God so judge His offending people? Why else have the devils been condemned to hell? Why else is there such intense and wide-spread misery in the earth at this day? Why else did God incarnate die? God is holy; and He will make the world to know it. God has an infinite hatred of sin; and He will force mankind to believe it. God is merciful, it

is true; but at whatever cost, God will root out active iniquity from this universe. At whatever cost, He will repel the actings of that obdurate rebellion, which now rages throughout the earth.

Do not therefore hope that the mercy of God will be any shelter to you then, if you despise His mercy now. That mercy is not in the least opposed to the sinner's condemnation. Nay, for aught you can tell, that mercy may even ensure the sinner's condemnation. Listen how the Lord in the 136th Psalm inspired His servant to magnify His mercy. "Oh! give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. To Him that smote Egypt in their first-born: for His mercy endureth for ever. And brought out Israel from among them; for His mercy endureth for ever. But overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; for His mercy endureth for ever. To Him which smote great kings; for His mercy endureth for ever. And slew famous kings; for His mercy endureth for ever." If it was mercy, that determined the death of Pharaoh and the Canaanites, mercy to the universe may demand the eternal death of the sinner. We only see a part of the wide dispensations of God; but He may see, that just as mercy to His people required the death of those transgressors, so the eternal death of the sinner may be mercy to the universe.

But perhaps you think it inconceivable, considering that there are such vast numbers who are as criminal as yourself (perhaps more so), that God should take vengeance upon all these.

Now, my dear hearers, numbers have nothing to do with the final decision God will make. You may depend upon it, that at the last day you will be judged apart, just as though you were the only sinner in existence. What determines the last judgment is the amount of guilt, and not the numbers of the guilty. Consider how extraordinary it were, if a nation should allow the wild beasts or the noxious vermin to remain with impunity, just because they swarmed in their forests and in their houses. And just as

foolish a reason is it, for a sinner to hope that he shall escape the wrath of God because there are many sinning as he does.

Alas! the numbers of the transgressors do but argue the more for the Divine severity, because they show how fatally sin propagates and perpetuates itself, and what a contagion has sprung up in the universe, which may spread—who can tell how widely? If sin has the fatal power, which the numbers of those living in rebellion against God prove that it has, then on that account it deserves the greater severity from your Maker and Judge.

Perhaps, driven from these hopes, you may take refuge in one other desperate supposition—that if at last you should come, as the just consequence of sin, to endure the pains of hell, those very sufferings may make you weary of sin, draw you back to God, and restore you to His favour—that if you must suffer, yet after some limited duration of punishment, your soul being purified and reclaimed to God, you shall join the hosts of the blessed for ever.

It is an utter delusion. It is a hope, that will totally disappoint the miserable creature that trusts in it. Converted by hell? Who ever was taught to love by suffering? There is no tendency—not the slightest tendency—in the pains of hell, to convert a single soul. One half hour of that awful suffering—nay the very sentence that consigns you to it—nay, the first moment after you escape from the body and find out your condition—I do not doubt you will be compelled to loathe the gains and pleasures of sin, and to curse yourselves if you continue in the folly of committing it; but to be convinced of the folly of sin and to loathe its gains, is not to be converted to God. Judas very soon found out the miserable choice that he had made; Judas felt a positive detestation of that sum of money, for which he had betrayed his Lord, and went and cast it down in the temple in abhorrence; but did Judas repent? was Judas converted? did he ever seek and find mercy? His heart was obdurate to the last. And so may you, if ever (which God forbid!) one among you

should come to the sufferings of the lost, be very speedily convinced of the unutterable folly of having lived as you did in impenitence; but there is not the slightest tendency in that conviction, to bring you back to God. Did ever the felon learn to love his judge, because he was sentenced by him to execution? Did ever the tortured wretch love the torturer? Do you think, that when you are lying under an intolerable weight of Divine wrath, and know that God has inflicted it, and feel that He has inflicted it justly, this will make you love Him? What a desperate expectation!

Make you love Him? I believe it will awaken unutterable blasphemies in the bosom of the damned. It has the same effect even now. Even now, the punishments with which God visits sinners often awaken blasphemies; and would always, were it not that His grace sometimes makes use of suffering to humble men and to draw them to repentance. In some of those judgments prophetically described as falling upon men, in the sixteenth chapter of the book of the Revelation, you have a very instructive account of the effect of unsanctified judgments upon men? "And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire; and men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues; and they repented not to give Him glory. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." It describes temporal judgments, it is true; but what an exact description also of the effects of future punishment! They were "scorched with great heat;" "and they repented not." They were "full of darkness, and gnawed their tongues for pain, and they blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores." I believe it is the history (by anticipation) of every ruined sinner that shall lie under the wrath of God hereafter. Be sure of this;

punishment has not the slightest tendency to draw the heart back to God.

It is true the Almighty might, if He pleased, convert even a lost and reprobate soul—because He can do all things; but the question is not what He *can* do, but what He *will* do. Now if it were His design that the punishment of the lost shall ultimately reclaim them to His service, then the description of the future punishment of the wicked would be that given in the twelfth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews; "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Hell would be a paternal correction, originating in infinite love, and ordained by the Almighty to bring His offending children to ages of unutterable happiness. Does any one, who knows the Bible, believe that that is the description of hell? "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"—is the sentence that must rest on the ungodly when he dies; and is there any paternal love there? God will "render to every man according to his deeds; to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil;" is there any love there? The account that the Almighty Himself inspired His servant to give, of the design with which the unjust will be at last condemned—the very passage in which He describes what is His design in sentencing the sinner to future punishment—is this; what, if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory?" His design in saving sinners is to make known His mercy; His design in condemning the wicked is to make known His wrath and power. There is no mercy there. And therefore, my friends, it is nothing but a desperate hope to which the sinner clings, when he supposes that the Almighty may have a design, by the penal infliction

of torture in hell, eventually to draw himself back to Him and to endless and boundless happiness. Alas! there is no such revealed design; and if on the one hand the tendency of punishment is only to alienate more, and if on the other hand God has no design to save those whom He sentences to punishment in the eternal world, where is the foundation for this hope of the sinner?

Now if you look to positive facts, do you find there the slightest indication that there is ever such a restoration of the lost to the enjoyment of the favour of God. When our Redeemer would convince those around Him upon earth of the magnitude of their guilt in rejecting His personal ministry, He used this remarkable language; "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes; but I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." We learn by these words, that the guilt of sinners is in proportion to their light and the means which they resist; but we learn further, that those miserable cities of antiquity that were thus overwhelmed by Divine judgment are reserved for a further doom, and that at the last judgment they will be found still exposed to the Divine vengeance. Now if ages of sorrow that have passed away, ages of unutterable anguish, have not drawn those miserable sinners to repentance—if at the last day, instead of being found amongst God's people, they are still reserved for the vengeance of eternity—what hope is there that any infliction of woe, through any conceivable duration of time, should convert a soul to God? If suffering could convert it, why are the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (now suffering the punishment of their sins) not converted to God? Why, when those miserable offenders against God shall rise at the last day, will it be found that they are still hardened and impenitent souls, and that there is a further punishment awaiting them? And, again, if the most dreadful inflictions of vengeance, the most

dreadful endurance and the most terrific anticipations, could possibly convert a sinner to God, I ask why has not Satan long ago repented of his crime? "God spared not," we read in the epistle of St. Peter—"God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment." They have lost the unutterable glory and bliss of heaven; they have been cast down into the unknown miseries of hell; they have been looking for more awful judgment still; and what effect has all this, continuing through long ages of suffering, had upon those apostate spirits? The devil has been "a murderer from the beginning." He tempted Adam to his ruin. He it was, who tempted Job with his malice. He it was, who "filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost." He it was, who entered into the heart of Judas to urge him to betray the Lord. He it was, who afflicted the demoniac of Galilee with such fearful misery. He is the great enemy of God and man at this moment—Satan, the opposer—who "now works in the children of disobedience." Though by all this he knows his doom is daily growing heavier, still is he fired with deadly malice against God and man, and the more because he knows (as the Scripture says) "that his time is short." Now if all the loss of heaven, and all the fearful miseries of hell suffered now, and all the appalling anticipations of future judgment, have only hardened the devil in his sin, I ask you, is there any probability that the sinner, who is to lie with him in the lake of fire, who is to be tormented with the devil and his angels, shall at any conceivable period be brought back to God? What we know of human nature on the one hand—what is revealed to us concerning Divine wrath on the other—and finally, all the facts with which we are acquainted—serve to show that it is an utter delusion to suppose that ever the punishments of hell shall redeem a sinner to penitence and love.

Here then let us pause. I have to dwell on the plain and awful evidence which the

Scripture furnishes, that the punishment of sinners will be eternal; but I have now said enough, I am sure, to deserve the attentive consideration of every person, who has lived to this day an ungodly life. And I now, in conclusion, only ask you, my dear hearers, young or old, who have lived in ungodliness, that you would consecrate this one day to prayer for your deliverance from eternal ruin. I ask *you* too, my Christian friends, so intimately associated with many who are thus careless and in this danger, that you would set apart some portion of this day, especially to pray for your unconverted friends and neighbours, the unconverted members of this whole congregation. If it is possible for you by your prayers to save a soul from eternal death, will you not give some time and some thought to the effort? For what has God set apart this day, but that it should be given to the interests of eternity, to the highest interests of the soul, to its welfare through the endless ages before it? And many are the encouraging assurances in God's Word, that intercessory prayer will be greatly blessed. When the nation of Israel, with the exception of Moses and his family, was about to be cut off at the foot of Sinai for idolatry, then we read that Moses earnestly interceded with the Lord for their preservation; and in the thirty-second chapter of Exodus we are told, "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." Again they sinned; again they were threatened with instant destruction; and Moses falling down before the Lord, said, "Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word." When Sodom and Gomorrah were threatened with destruction for their sins, the prayer of the patriarch Abraham so prevailed, that had ten persons only been found amidst the multitude, that were serving and loving God, those cities had been saved. And when the prophet Elijah, after three years and a half of famine and of drought, entreated the Lord

to remove that plague from His guilty people, God heard his prayers, and the refreshing rain descended and the earth gave forth its harvests again. And the apostle, looking to such instances as these, has assured us that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." With such assurances encouraging you to pray for the most guilty and the most hardened, let me ask you, my Christian brethren, to set apart some portion of this day to pray especially for the unconverted portion of this congregation. Pray that God would glorify Himself in saving the youngest, who have been most thoughtless—and the old, who have been most obdurate. Pray that He would glorify Himself in the rescue of many a soul from that eternal death, which their sins have deserved. And, finally, let me ask *you*, my dear friends, who as yet have lived in sin, who as yet have remained impenitent notwithstanding the solicitations of the Word of God, that you would pray for *yourselves*; because, remember, if you will not pray, it may manifest a carelessness and a hardness of heart, which God will never forgive. Simon the sorcerer, when at length convinced of his danger in having "thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money," and when told that he was in danger of perishing on this account, said to the apostles, "Pray ye to the Lord for me;" but we never read, either that he prayed himself, or that their prayers on his behalf were answered. And remember, God may be pleased in His justice to say of you, as He did say of His offending people of old to the prophet, "Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me, for I will not hear." If a sinner will not pray for himself, God may say He will not hear the prayers of others on his behalf. Therefore, sinner! *pray you*. Devote some portion of the hours of this day (if ever you prayed in your life) to entreat the Lord to avert from you the eternal ruin, with which you are menaced. It is a matter too urgent to admit of trifling. Never be ashamed of that, which is the only road to happiness. Pray

earnestly for yourselves ; ask your friends to pray for you ; seek that this day the Lord may bring your souls to Himself, ere you accumulate fresh guilt and are ripened for destruction. And let me especially ask, that you all pray for a blessing on the other part of our subject this evening, that your hearts may be opened to all the solemn influence of this affecting truth ; and among the many means which God has provided to draw you from the love and practice of iniquity, may this be found effectual—the certain and clear evidence that God has given to you, that the misery of those that shall be condemned at the last day must be *eternal !*

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SERMON X.

THE ETERNITY OF THE DOOM PREPARED FOR THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, SEPT. 29, 1839.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."—Matthew xxv. 46.

I ENDEAVOURED this morning to show you how fallacious those objections are to the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the ungodly, upon which they are accustomed to depend, and by which they encourage themselves in that course of neglect which must issue in the punishment they might have otherwise escaped. But all do not depend on those objections, which are derived from the necessary character and nature of sin, but rather endeavour to maintain their opinions by reference to the Word of God itself, thinking that they can find proof in the Scriptures, that the punishment threatened to the ungodly will either be their annihilation, or else a limited duration of punishment which shall issue in their restoration to the Divine favour. I therefore proceed to investigate the Scripture evidence which there is upon this subject, and to show you from an examination of various passages, that we have reason to believe that the punishment of the ungodly will be strictly and decidedly eternal—that it is not annihilation, that it is not a limited duration of suffering, but a suffering that must last for ever and ever.

May the Almighty God, who has been pleased to reveal to us this truth, who has stated it most explicitly, who has given us repeated intimations of it, enable us all to derive from those intimations that solemn warning, for which undoubtedly they were designed, and lead those that have hitherto been careless in this congregation to seek and to find salvation through Jesus Christ.

First, my brethren, the punishment of the wicked in the next world is not *annihilation*.

We are told by our Saviour to expect at the last day a universal resurrection of the

good and of the evil; at which time He tells us, "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and they shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." The very fact of a universal resurrection ought to intimate to sinners that they must not look for a punishment like annihilation; because God does nothing in vain, and if the dead are to be raised only to be instantaneously annihilated, why should they be raised at all? The very fact that they will then receive an immortal body, seems to intimate that there is a much more lasting punishment reserved for them.

But there are various considerations, more plain than that, which serve to show that the wicked (who die so) must not expect to be annihilated. For the punishment which is threatened to them in the eternal world is susceptible of various degrees, corresponding to the present conduct of sinners in this world. "We must all appear," says St. Paul, "before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each of us may receive according to the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad;" "according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad." If each action is to be weighed, and even the very words which we have spoken here shall be estimated in the judgment, then there must be various degrees of punishment in the eternal world. And this is often and very plainly intimated to us. As for instance where our Saviour says, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you;" whence it appears that

different classes of sinners will at the day of judgment have different degrees of punishment, and these will be in proportion to their guilt. Because Bethsaida and Chorazin resisted greater means of instruction, their doom at the last day will be more terrible than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Our Lord declares, that the servant who "knew his Master's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes;" whereas he who knew it not and was disobedient, shall be "beaten with few." St. Peter also assures us, that the lot of a sinner becomes worse in proportion to the degree of knowledge which he enjoys here below; for he says of some who proved apostates in his day—"If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning;" their guilt is greater, and their punishment will be greater too; "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." From these and other passages, it is plain that there are different degrees of punishment. But if sinners are to be all annihilated at the day of judgment, their punishment is exactly the same—the most hardened blasphemer, and the unconverted child, will be placed exactly on the same level; an idea which is neither consistent with any proper notions of the Divine judgment, nor in the least in accordance with these various passages. Doubtless the punishment at the last day will be exactly discriminative; and if it be so, it is impossible that at that day it should lead to the annihilation of the sinner. It is also declared positively in God's Word, that the punishment of that day will be one which sinners shall feel. The language of our text declares this most plainly. "These," it is said, "shall go away into everlasting punishment." That word is only once employed besides in the New Testament, and there it is translated thus: "Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment"—

the proper signification of the word. Substitute that translation for the one in our text, and you will see how incompatible it is with the idea of the annihilation of the sinner; "These shall go away into everlasting torment, but the righteous into life eternal." If a sinner, the moment he was sentenced, should cease to be, and therefore cease to suffer, how could he "go away into everlasting torment?" And indeed, the various places where this subject is mentioned, lead us with equal distinctness to the same conclusion. For instance, our Lord, when He exhorts sinners to struggle against their evil habits, and to overcome them, repeatedly tells them that they must otherwise expect to go to that place, "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" but if the sinner were to be annihilated, the worm *would* die, his torture would cease, and that Word of God could not be fulfilled. We are told, that he who lives to please himself, rather than to serve God, will be cast as an unprofitable servant into "outer darkness, where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but if the sinner were to be annihilated, how could he be in the place where there was "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth?" He would cease to suffer instantaneously, and there would be no more weeping. We are told, by St. Paul, that in the day when the Lord Jesus shall judge the past course of men according to the Gospel, those that have been "contentious and have not obeyed the truth, shall be sentenced to tribulation and anguish;" but how could there be "tribulation and anguish" if they had ceased to exist? And sometimes this is told us very explicitly. It is said of all whose names are not written in the book of life, that they "shall be cast into the lake of fire;" and of sinners in the lake of fire, it is said, they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." How is this compatible with annihilation?

And therefore it is a desperate hope which the sinner entertains, that the punishment revealed in Scripture is the punishment of annihilation. The plainest language of God's Word assures us that it cannot

be so. The immortal being will live on—must live on for ever—as long as the eternal existence of God.

But if he may not look for annihilation, may the sinner hope that after a *limited duration* of suffering, he shall be restored to the favour of God?

Alas! my friends, the language of Scripture here is no less explicit; many very plain and unequivocal passages declare to us that his sufferings will not be for a time, but for ever.

In the first place, the very strongest terms that can be found in the Greek language to express eternity, are employed to denote the duration of a sinner's punishment. If the words, that are employed in Scripture to declare the duration of a sinner's punishment, do not describe or express eternity, then there are no terms found in the language to do it. All the terms that are employed to describe the eternity of the existence of God, the eternity of the reign of Christ, the eternity of the blessedness of the saints, are also employed to describe the misery of the lost; and how can any one, in the view of those passages hope that he shall escape from an eternity of suffering? If it is said that God "liveth and abideth for ever," and that the Lord Jesus Christ "liveth for ever" so is it said, he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost "hath not forgiveness for ever;" the very same word being employed in the latter case as employed in the two former. Sometimes still stronger terms are employed, both in reference to the one and the other. It is said that the Lord Jesus Christ "shall reign for ever and ever;" it is said of the Almighty, that He "liveth for ever and ever;" and in the very same terms it is said that the sinner shall be tormented "for ever and ever." The strongest terms that could be selected to express eternity, are in these three places employed; and if God be eternal when He lives for ever and ever, and if the reign of Christ be eternal when it is described as being for ever and ever, then must the torment of the sinner be eternal too, for it is

described in the same terms. There is another word; the corresponding adjective is sometimes employed to describe the eternity of God. He is termed "the everlasting God;" we read of the "eternal Spirit"—the "everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"—and in this passage of "life eternal;" the same word being employed in every case. And this word is no less employed constantly to describe the misery of the lost. Our Lord, for instance, in the eighteenth chapter of St. Matthew, urges upon those who heard Him to break off all their sins, lest they should come into "everlasting fire." "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee" (that is, cause thee to sin), "cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." The expression, again, is the same in our text; "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." We read in the epistle to the Thessalonians, that at the coming of the Saviour, sinners "shall be punished with everlasting destruction;" and we read of the "eternal judgment;" the same word in all these cases being employed. So that, if God be eternal, and Christ eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal, and the bliss of saints eternal, no less is the punishment of the lost, their destruction, their torment, eternal too.

In another series of passages the same truth is described negatively, in a way which cannot be mistaken. There can be no just questioning of the meaning of those positive terms, because they are the strongest which the language can supply; and if we conceive the Holy Spirit to have inspired the apostles to express positively and distinctly the eternal sufferings of the lost, they could not, in that language have expressed themselves more strongly than they have, they could not have found terms stronger than those which have been employed in fact. Still they sometimes speak in a negative way, in a manner which is perhaps still more unequivocal. For instance, our Lord says to His disciples in the ninth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel—"If thy hand offend thee

cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." He tells them, in another place, that God will, at the final judgment, "burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable." He positively declares of him who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost that he hath never forgiveness; "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." There can, then, be no forgiveness for such; and if "the fire never shall be quenched," "the worm shall never die," and the sinner shall "never be forgiven," where is the hope that after a limited duration of suffering, the condemned transgressor shall enjoy the favour and blessing of God for ever and for ever? Then *would* the fire have been quenched, the worm have died, and the sinner be forgiven in the next world, if not in this.

Again; there is another series of passages, in which it is said that the sinner shall be destroyed, and in which there are four different words, as emphatic as the language can supply, to express the absolute destruction of the sinner. "Wide is the gate," we read in the seventh chapter of St. Matthew—"wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction." We read, in the second epistle of St. Peter, that the "heavens and the earth are reserved against the day of judgment and of the perdition" (where the same word is used—"of the destruction") "of ungodly men." Sometimes another word is used, as in that passage I have already quoted, in the first chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians—"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." Sometimes the corresponding verb is used, to show that God will bring sinners to destruction; "Fear not them that kill the body, and after that have nothing that they can do; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." And, on one occasion,

the most emphatic word, I believe, that could be employed on this subject, is used to describe the destruction of a sinner: "These as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Now, my brethren, what must be the amount of that punishment in the eternal world, which, not being annihilation, not involving the destruction of consciousness, consistent with sensible suffering, is yet to "be destroyed?" Imagine that a person should, after a day's pain, enjoy a thousand years of happiness; could you call him "destroyed?" But the ratio of a day to a thousand years is far greater than the ratio of any conceivable duration to eternity; and it would be more proper to say of a man, who, after a day's pain, should be a thousand years blessed, that he was "destroyed," than to say it of a man, who, after any conceivable duration, should be then eternally blessed? No; "destruction" must mean a punishment which is intolerable, which is universal, which is hopeless, which is eternal. And what less does our Saviour signify by that very peculiar expression, in which He declares the final punishment of those who reject Him; "on whomsoever this stone shall fall" (meaning Himself) "it will grind him to powder!" That is, a person who shall realise that awful end, will assuredly have no more capacity of being eventually happy, than the insect that is, crushed under the fallen rock. It would be just as easy to imagine the insect, or the flower, crushed under the fallen mountain, to be afterwards revived to the enjoyment of life, as to suppose that he, who is "ground to powder," and yet exists and is conscious and suffers, can be hereafter happy.

To this I must add another series of passages from God's Word, which intimate distinctly that a sinner can never escape from the place of torment until he has made a full atonement to God for his sins. When our Lord urges upon His disciples that they should exercise a forgiving spirit, and that they should avoid injustice towards

one another, He thus describes the consequences which must ensue if they violate this law ; He says, "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art in the way with him"—that is, he who has any just cause of complaint against you ; (for instance of unchristian conduct ;)—"lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the avenger, and thou be cast into prison ; verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." In the parable of the unforgiving servant, He has given us the same assurance. He declares that servant to owe his master ten thousand talents—a sum which the servant could not possibly pay ; upon that servant manifesting an unforgiving spirit, our Lord declares that the sentence upon him was this—"The lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him ;" and then our Lord adds, "So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." He then, who lives in injustice, and he who cherishes an unforgiving spirit, is to be cast into the prison of the lost, and shall never escape thence till he has paid to God "the uttermost farthing." And when shall such an one escape ? It is, in the very nature of things, impossible that he should ever escape. As utterly impossible as it was for that servant to pay the ten thousand talents, so utterly is it impossible for a sinner ever to pay what is due to the Creator ; for we owe Him, at every moment, all we can possibly pay ; all the honour and praise, all the love and service which it is possible for us to pay, we owe to our God each moment ; and each moment instead of liquidating a debt, that has been previously contracted, we must and cannot fail to contract fresh obligations to Him. But, besides this, there is not the slightest reason to hope, as we have shown you already, that in the eternal world the sinner will have the slightest disposition to "pay" at all. More corrupt, more hardened, more blaspheming than he was on earth, how shall he pay one

farthing of that which is due to his Creator ? But Christ says, that he must not come out until he has paid the "uttermost farthing ;" and that is—never. If a sinner shall never leave hell till he has atoned to the Almighty for his guilt, he must be under His wrath for ever and for ever.

Again ; there is an expression which our Lord has employed respecting the traitor Judas, which also very plainly intimates that sinners in general will not at the last be restored to the Divine favour and enjoy this for ever. When He declared that He must be betrayed by that unhappy man, our Lord used these terms ; "The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed ; it had been good for that man if he had never been born." Now imagine that sinners, after any conceivable duration of suffering should be restored to the favour of God, and then live a boundless eternity of joy ; it could be no more said that it was "good for them never to have been born," than it could be said of him who should spend a long life of enjoyment after one half hour of pain. Imagine the suffering past ; imagine the triumphant soul making its escape from the prison of the damned ; imagine it ushered by exulting angels into the presence and glory of God, welcomed eventually as his child to be happy through the countless ages of eternity ; who could then say, it would have been well that that man had never been born ? But it is said of him ; it must be true of him ; it must be true of all who have sinned as Judas had ; and God, who knows how much more light we have had, how many more advantages we have had, may consider that numbers—numbers who reject the Gospel now—are as highly criminal as him, who, overcome by the lust of money, did for that petty gain, betray his Master and his Lord.

Surely these passages may serve to show to any one, who forms his judgment of the future from the language of the Word of God, that he has no rational hope, if he dies impenitent and unpardoned, of escaping from the punishment that is due to him.

Observe, my brethren, that if of these various series of Scriptures any one has been rightly explained (and for brevity's sake I pass over many passages of the same kind), then is this doctrine proved; if any one of those series of passages has been rightly explained. Is it conceivable, that the Almighty, who has given us this Book to guide us into all truth, should so have allowed these predictions of future punishment to be worded, that the most obvious, most natural, almost necessary, if not quite necessary sense was that the punishment should be eternal, when He knew that that was not true? Is it conceivable, that the Almighty should so have determined that His inspired Word should have been penned? But observe the accumulated force of these passages. If it is inconceivable, that any one such series should have been so worded by the Omniscient Spirit, how much less is it conceivable, that *all of them* should have been so worded that there should have been a number of independent series of Scripture, each of them in different language, and all of them seeming to intimate the same truth, while we find no passages, no single passage, not the slightest intimation to the contrary? Is that conceivable, if the Almighty knew the sinner was not to be eternally condemned? Who can suppose that God Almighty has given us an inspired record of His will, which is thus inconsistent? And therefore, looking at the accumulated force of these series of passages, all of them seeming to pronounce the same truth, I feel that we must come, however reluctantly, to this conclusion, as an established truth—that the misery which the wicked has to expect after his sentence, his final sentence shall be pronounced upon him, is a misery which is truly and properly eternal.

Now let me beseech you, my dear brethren, again to recur to these passages at your leisure—to weigh them, as the record descriptive of the sentence which will be pronounced upon you severally when you stand before the Son of Man. And I ask you, with those passages in your memory,

that you would make every possible effort to escape from a punishment which is so awful. I beseech every unconverted person in this assembly, that he would delay no more and trifle no longer; but that (remembering that if any thing is shown clearly in Scripture, it is this, that if he continue in sin he must perish everlastingly) he would endeavour to escape. Unconverted men and unconverted women! unconverted persons, who are now approaching the grave, you who have sinned through a long life and are impenitent! and unconverted children too, who are entering on a course of rebellion from which you must be preserved or perish! I entreat you to seek salvation through Christ. Unconverted rich men, who are busied with the occupations of life, or entangled with its amusements! unconverted poor men, who often make your cares, and anxieties a still greater impediment, to the care of your souls! unconverted children in our Sabbath schools! unconverted children of Christian parents; unconverted servants in Christian families! unconverted members of this congregation, who have often heard the most solemn and the most animating truths in vain! unconverted strangers, who, perhaps, by the providence of God, have this evening been brought into this house of prayer! I beseech you all, as you would stand before your Judge in peace, that you now seek to escape from a punishment which is eternal. Contemplate the amount of that pain which *you personally* must undergo. It is to lie under your Maker's curse; it is to be cursed by an almighty, omniscient, and an eternal Being, against whom there is no resistance and from whom there is no escape; whom you cannot deceive, and whom you will never again be able to oppose. You will lie under His curse, who will look on you for ever; and you will feel the intolerable misery of being in the bands of an omnipotent Sovereign who never again—*never again*—will feel one emotion of mercy. Let me beg you to remember, that God has declared of you, that if you live and die in your present state you will be tormented body and soul, with the

devil and his angels, in the unquenchable fire of hell; and this will be for ever—for ever—as I have now shown you from the Word of God, for ever! Oh! most melancholy doom of a lost soul! My hearer, when your years of penal torture have outnumbered all the drops of water in the ocean, and all the grains of sand on every shore, and all the leaves in every forest, and all the blades of grass in every field, it will be but *beginning* still; and when those years have swelled into ages as innumerable, it will be but *beginning* still; and when you have spent uncounted millions of such ages of intolerable suffering and punishment, it will be but *beginning* still; because after any conceivable duration of suffering there is an *eternity* of anguish remaining behind. Oh! if after any conceivable limit of sorrow, any conceivable period of suffering beyond all calculation, there was even then the prospect of an end at last, there would be some mitigation of the gloomy prospect which lies before each sinner. But to ask for annihilation and not find it—to entreat for death and have death fly you—to wish that you were hid from the wrath of the Avenger and to feel it impossible—and after doleful ages of misery, still to have this abhorred and accursed sound ringing in your ears and thrilling your heart, “For ever!” “For ever!”—how can you bear it?

Oh! my brethren, you must try to escape. It is not well to meet with suffering so awful as this! There is no wrestling with Omnipotence. A creature must not stand in opposition to his Maker. And you have done it hitherto; and you have poured contempt upon His Gospel; and you have rejected His Son. Oh! that you would escape from a condition which is so infinitely perilous! There is not a condition on earth, that can bear comparison with this. The islander, when suspended midway down the cliff by a solitary rope, supporting himself by that rope while he went from ledge to ledge and hung over the raging ocean, was in a condition of safety and of peace compared with you; for you are suspended by the brittle thread of human life over the raging flames

of the bottomless abyss, and you know not how soon your angry God will sentence you to fall. For what—for what will you continue to expose yourselves to this awful doom? I have seen one of the most melancholy spectacles that can afflict humanity; I have seen a father who was amiable, generous, affectionate, devoted to his duties—I have seen him, his property neglected, his children forgotten, his life useless, playing for long hours with a piece of tape or a scrap of paper; and though destitution and misery had stared him in the face, he would have played on—for he was insane. And I ask, are you not imitating this miserable man, you who are opposing your Maker, trampling under foot all the doctrines of the Gospel, trifling with the interests of eternity—who are day by day occupied with the trifles of a day as though they were to last for ever, while you have no heart for all the glories of the saved and no fear of all the misery of the damned? There is no explanation of such conduct as this, except that which is given us in the Word of God; “Yea also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go down to the dead.” Madness—*madness* is in the heart of every one, who lives on, offending his Creator and exposed to eternal wrath, for the sake of some momentary indulgence or some transient and insignificant gain. In the name of God let me beseech you to live for that eternity which you have hitherto despised, and by all possible means to seek an interest in the Saviour whom you have hitherto contemned.

How ought you to seek that blessing! Our Lord has shown us what in His view a man should do to obtain it. “The kingdom of heaven is like a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it.” That is His view of the worth of the blessings of salvation; that is His view of the course which an unregenerate sinner should take to seek an interest in that Saviour. Cast away everything which interferes with your attainment of eternal life; contemn and utterly despise

every obstacle in the way of your everlasting happiness ; if it be possible, escape by all sacrifices and by all efforts from eternal death. Do you fear the ridicule of the world? Listen to your Saviour's exhortation ; " Fear not them which kill the body, and afterwards have nothing that they can do, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Let not the fear of any earthly consequences prevent you from turning to God. Let them not for one moment in your minds interfere with your pursuit of salvation. All that you can suffer, all that you can endure is not worth one moment's thought, if only you may be saved from eternal—*eternal* despair.

Oh ! my friends, if you would be happy, waste no more time. God calls you to His throne of grace ; God bids you from this day to seek Him with all earnestness that you may find peace in Christ. When Simon the sorcerer was pronounced by the apostle to be in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity—at that moment a transgressor, who if he should die, would perish eternally—yet the apostle said to him, "Repent of this thy wickedness and pray God that it may be forgiven." He was summoned to repentance and to prayer ; and by that invitation to Simon is every unconverted sinner here entreated to repent and pray. And if you knew the blessedness of being disciples of Christ--if you could but see something of the goodness of Him who invites you—if you had ever tasted the preciousness of those promises which you have hitherto despised—you would ask and you would have. " If thou knewest," said our Saviour to the woman of Samaria—"if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have

giving thee living water." Now, brethren, something of this you do know. You know, that there is a Saviour from eternal death ; you know that Jesus Christ has equal goodness and power ; you know that He is ready to bless every effort that you make to escape from wrath ; you know that " His blood cleanseth from all sin ;" you know that He can make His disciples happy in His service ; and as you know this, why do not you ask for His Spirit, in confidence that you will not ask in vain ? I entreat you, as you shall stand ere long before your Maker, that you would from this day begin the habit of fervent prayer. Pray humbly ; for you have much to confess. Pray in the name of Christ ; for you are not worthy to approach your Maker in any other way. Pray in the use of all the means of grace ; for God will never bless indolence and insincerity. Pray in the way of duty ; for if you wilfully go on in sin you are asking Him to destroy you. Pray with the earnestness, which becomes those who are candidates for an eternity of blessing. Pray with perseverance ; for as you have made the Almighty wait for your service, you should patiently wait His time to have mercy on you. Pray in hope of His goodness and in dependence on His promises. Thus pray on, my brethren, till the blessing is yours. And it may be, that not a few of those who are at present in that perilous position—the perilous position of a sinner exposed to the righteous vengeance of his Maker, with nothing before him but the prospect of eternal misery—may ere long be established on the Rock of ages, and, rejoicing in the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God, look with mingled exultation and gratitude on your deliverance from eternal death.

SERMON XI.

THE PROBABILITY OF THE DEATH OF THE UNCONVERTED SPEEDILY
AND WITHOUT WARNING.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 6, 1839.

“ And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”—Luke xii. 16—21.

THE words which I have now read contain another of those solemn truths, eminently adapted to awaken unconcerned and unconverted persons. I have already brought before you, my careless hearers, considerations which should be enough to awaken you to seek instantly the grace of God, and with such decision and constancy as might bring you to the enjoyment of that blessing. Possibly those considerations have however been in vain. I will therefore bring you before this other truth, hoping that if one consideration fail of exercising its due influence upon your minds, God may be pleased to bless another. I have set before you the invitation made to sinners in Christ; I have shown you the necessity of a change of heart and life, if you would have an interest in the blessings that Christ died to procure; I have shown you that each sinner deserves eternal death, and that he must look for it at the hands of a just God, unless through His converting grace he becomes a believer in Jesus Christ; I have shown you, that you have every reason to expect that that punishment will be intolerable and eternal; and now let me show you what cause each unconverted person has, to dread lest it should happen speedily.

The temper of the rich man, described in this parable, was to overvalue his worldly possessions and to reckon upon future years in which to enjoy them. For this he was suddenly cut off; God said to him, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee;” while anticipating years of enjoyment, he was suddenly cut off. And in liv-

ing in that state, so unprepared for eternity, and reckoning upon time that was not his own, he was guilty of the greatest folly; “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

This parable was formed by our Saviour with the view of instructing that class of persons who should resemble this rich man. For the conclusion he drew from the parable was this; “So” (that is, in such circumstances) “is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.” Every man, therefore, who is in the temper of mind of the rich man in the parable, was intended by our Lord to apply the parable to himself. It is calculated to instruct every one, who is in the temper of that rich man. And this involves many that are poor, as well as those that are rich; because in poverty there may be just the same temper, that there is in the possession of wealth. The possession of wealth may eminently tempt a man to this temper, but it is perfectly compatible with a state of worldly poverty. The man who is seeking wealth, may be in just the same temper of mind, as the man who is enjoying it. And it is intended for all such. “So is he, that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.” That person therefore among us who “is not rich toward God,” who has not His grace, His favour, the blessings of the covenant of grace, and is not a disciple of Christ—that man among us, who has no faith and is not converted by the grace of God, but who is looking for his happiness from time rather than eternity—is the person who has reason to anticipate, according

to our Lord's instruction here, that while he is reckoning upon future time in which to enjoy the only happiness for which he has any taste, God may say to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Observe, my brethren, that is the very instruction which our Lord would have each person derive from this parable. He formed it for this express end—that all such persons, who being destitute of Divine grace were seeking their happiness here and depending on future years for the enjoyment of that happiness, should see that they have reason to fear that God may say to them, as well as to that rich man, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

In order then to bring this instruction of our Saviour home to our own hearts, let us consider, first, what it is to be in the temper of that rich man—who they are, that are living in this temper; secondly, the reason such have to fear that they may be suddenly cut off; and thirdly, how extremely unwise it is to expose themselves to such an end.

May God bring this truth home to the mind of each careless person in this congregation; and if the dread of an eternal and intolerable punishment, which seems distant, has not moved you to seek the grace of God in earnest, may the thought of an eternal and intolerable punishment, which may be close at hand, have that blessed effect.

First, who are those that live in the temper of this rich man?

There is reason to fear, that unconverted persons in general have very much of the temper of the rich man in the parable. For like him they certainly over-value worldly blessings. We *must* seek after happiness; there is not a man living, who does not earnestly seek after happiness. Those that are brought to God by His grace seek after happiness in Him; they seek for the possession of eternal joy, they wish for His grace and favour, they desire to be conformed to Him, they seek happiness, in His ways, and then with reference to this world they seek a subordinate and a moderate happiness in the right use of all His providential gifts, still looking forward to eternity as their true

home and to the possession of His favour and blessing as their highest good. But those who have no taste for spiritual happiness, must seek their happiness here. To them this world is all. They, not caring for spiritual blessings, or at least not caring for them so much as earnestly to seek them, are therefore setting their hearts upon things below. Whether they be rich or whether they be poor, makes in this respect no difference; all are seeking as much as they can obtain of earthly good. Without reference to the will of God, without any desire of glorifying Him, each would accumulate as much as he possibly can of earthly happiness. And this was the temper of that rich man; "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up;" he was seeking his enjoyment in these earthly things—as every unconverted person does.

In the next place he was reckoning upon future years, in which to enjoy them. And I fear there are very few persons that are not doing so; few, I mean of those whom God has not yet taught to "set their affections on things above." I do not mean that it is a sin for a person, with strict reference to the will of the supreme Disposer of events, to think it possible or probable that he may live so many years; because so to do is in accordance with what is observed of fact, and is calculated to answer many useful ends. But the Christian will do it with a strict reference to the will of that supreme Disposer, feeling that He can at any moment terminate life and that all events are in His hand. I speak, however, of the temper of that man, who reckons upon future years without any reference to the will of God—who, if he acknowledges in general terms that God does dispose of all things by His all-wise providence, virtually overlooks it, and because he is healthy and young and prosperous is expecting that he shall have years still in which to enjoy life.

Now there are various things, which may serve to show whether a person is depending on these future years or not. If a man so lives, that he will neglect to pursue things, which he knows he must some time or other have or be ruined—if he will neglect certain

duties, which he knows must sooner or later be performed or he must be a ruined man—then he neglects them because he thinks he shall be able to attend to them at some future time. He is therefore reckoning on that time; and the fact that he does not now what he intends to do at some time or another, shows that he is in fact reckoning upon future time (be it longer or shorter) as his own. If a person does, on the other hand, live in the indulgence of habits, which must be broken off or else he must be ruined—if he is allowing himself in tempers, of which he must repent or he will be destroyed—that person shows that he is depending upon future years, or at least upon future time; because if he were perfectly convinced that in a very short time he would be called into the presence of his Maker, when he would be certainly ruined for ever unless he repented, he would seek to repent now, and would not be at ease in the indulgence of those tempers and of those habits. If, again, a person lives at ease, in the absence of any blessing which he must have or else be a miserable man, it shows (if he knows that) that he is expecting the blessing may become his at some future period; without which he could not possibly be at ease. If a man was perfectly persuaded that he must be converted by the grace of God or else be miserable for ever, and further that this must take place in less than a week, that he had not another week in which to seek that blessing, would he be at ease in his unchanged condition?—the fact therefore that a man is at ease while he is still unconverted, shows that he is depending (whether wisely or not) upon future years, in which that blessing may become his. If, again, a man greatly overvalues the things of time, his worldly possessions, this proves that he is depending upon future years for their enjoyment. If a person were completely convinced that he would have to give up all his earthly treasures in another week or another day—if they must all be torn from him, whether he will or not—is it likely that he would value them very highly? Would a man be proud of having a little more wealth than another, if he knew that

he must be stripped of it all in a few days? Would a man be envious of another's prosperity, if he knew that prosperity could last but a few days, or that in a few days he must be taken from "this world, where the want of it is felt? could a man then indulge envy? If a man is exceedingly anxious to possess earthly good, it proves that he is expecting to have some time in which to enjoy that good; thus to fix the heart upon anything earthly, to feel keenly its loss, to be greatly depressed by adversity or equally elated by prosperity, proves that a man is depending upon future time for the enjoyment of earthly good. Our Saviour, again, has intimated to us, in a passage in the twelfth chapter of St. Luke, that the expectation of some years to live is calculated to excite in a worldly mind wrong dispositions towards his fellow-men; "If," he says,—"if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maidens and to eat and drink and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." In which passage He shows us, that when a man is persuaded that God is delaying His coming and that he will not be speedily called to his account, then he is disposed to indulge in various evil tempers towards his fellow-men, which otherwise he would repress. If therefore a man can easily indulge in contention, if he can easily quarrel with his fellow-men, about pecuniary interests, about political factions, about religious opinions, or in short respecting anything else—if he can easily indulge in violence of feeling towards them—it shows that he is counting on future years, and saying, "My Lord delayeth His coming." How speedily would all this be repressed, if the man was perfectly convinced that in a few days he must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ! Would he then be indulging in violent tempers or violent dispositions towards men? We see that even irreligious persons, when they are approaching death, are anxious to have all this forgiven; they are very anxious to have

the forgiveness of those, to whom they have done wrong, and they often declare openly at such a season, that they forgive all who have done them wrong; because they know that an angry and unforgiving spirit is a state of mind, in which they cannot appear with acceptance before the Judge of all. And if a person was perfectly convinced that in a few days he must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, how meek, how generous, how just, how mild, how kind and gentle would that person be! But if any one is living in the contrary of all this, whether he acknowledge it or not, it shows that like the person in the parable he is reckoning on future years, in which he may alter (and means to alter) and mollify those unchristian dispositions.

Now if these things show that a person is reckoning on future years, does not some one or other of them show that many unconverted persons in this congregation are now, like the rich man in the parable, thus depending on future years? If you are not saying to yourselves as he did, that you "have much goods laid up for many years, and may take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry," still you are eagerly seeking the earthly happiness which you may think attainable, in the neglect of all those better things, which if you were quite conscious that you would in a very short time stand before God, you would be more anxious to attain.

Let me now, in the second place, remind you, that our Lord has here taught us, that every person indulging in this temper has too much reason to fear that God may say to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee;" or, in other words, that he may fear lest he should be suddenly cut off.

At the best, my dear friends, human life is exceedingly short, to a considerate person's views. The account given of it by the psalmist, in the nineteenth Psalm, is most affectingly true; "We spend our years as a tale that is told; the days of our years, are threescore years and ten, and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sor-

row, for it is soon cut off and we fly away." Which of us can expect to live to one hundred years of age? And what are one hundred years, compared with one hundred thousand? And we have all to live beyond the grave, not one hundred thousand years alone, but one hundred thousand centuries of years—nay, an eternity of duration. If a person was quite certain that he would have a hundred years upon earth, could those hundred years be better, more wisely, more economically employed, than in preparing to be happy through a hundred thousand centuries! Could any man do better than spend those hundred years with the most sedulous and anxious care to provide for the happiness of a hundred thousand centuries?

But, my friends, it is an extravagant view for any one to take, that he shall live to that threescore years and ten. The average of human life is incomparably shorter than that. By the public registers (taken with care) of the births and marriages in the kingdom of Belgium, in which the length of human life differs very little from its length in our own country, it has been ascertained, that of the number of persons born in any given year, more than half will have died before twenty-five years are over; within twenty-five years, half of those born in any year pass into eternity; and therefore for all to expect to reach threescore years and ten is extravagant folly, judging by what we see of human life. In an examination which has been published of ten thousand deaths, which occurred in a district of England from the year 1813 to the year 1850, it has been ascertained that 8,802 of those persons died before they were forty-two years of age; that is, nearly nine-tenths of the whole, nearly nine out of every ten of the persons dying in that district, died before they were forty-two years of age. And therefore it would be extravagant, for the generality to expect to live to threescore years and ten. The sum of human life, already short, is thus reduced by positive observation to a much briefer period.

And even this does not represent adequately its brevity with respect to a vast number. The whole class, for instance, of

persons with a sickly and fragile constitution from their childhood cannot reasonably expect to live so long. By giving them that frame, God has said to them that He will at least call *them* earlier than most; and they may plainly see, that it is not likely they will live to the age allotted to most men. Old persons, again, cannot live more than three or four years; and the period is very brief to them, in which they can possibly prepare for eternity—for the immense, the boundless region that lies beyond the grave. The old person, the sickly person, the man advancing in years, must know that he has very little time to prepare for his eternal condition.

But this is judging of things as they happen ordinarily; we all know that this does not give at all a proper view of what each man may expect from God. It is true, that God so governs the world, as to allow natural causes to accomplish their proper effects; and therefore it is not irreligious to make those general observations, which are now very properly made by authors and by observers upon human life; but let us recollect that God has distinctly told us, that nothing of this happens by chance. He has not therefore foregone His own dominion. The Lord Jesus Christ claims (as we know) in the first chapter of the Revelation, "the keys of hell and of death;" opening death and the grave, or shutting them, just as He will, and determining when a man shall die and how long he shall live. We know too, that even "a sparrow does not fall to the ground" without His permission, and "the very hairs of our head are all numbered." He, then determines when the meanest shall die, and how long the meanest shall live; because, though indeed how long each man lives according to those natural circumstances in which he is placed may be calculated, God has an absolute controul over them all, and human life may be determined by a thousand things—by the climate, by the harvest, by accident, and a multitude of things which influence life or death. God has an absolute controul over them all; and every disturbing cause (and these sometimes

affect human life far more than those ordinary causes do) is in His hand too; so that each man is to remember that every thing affecting his lot is determined by his Almighty Sovereign, who can when He pleases terminate his life or as He pleases continue it.

As we know, then, that God can terminate human life when He pleases, every person who is living in disregard of His will has reason to fear lest he should terminate it *suddenly*.

For, in the first place, we know that God has an absolute right to end human life when He pleases. He gave it; and He may withdraw it. He preserves it; and He may discontinue it. And men have sinned enough to forfeit, not only their natural life, but also the life of their souls.

God has often exercised this right. When He swept away the population of the earth with a flood, He showed His full right over human life. When He destroyed all persons, young and old, in Sodom and Gomorrah, He showed His full right over human life. When seventy thousand died of the plague because David numbered the people of Israel, God again showed His full right over human life. He has an absolute right to take away life, for He gave it. And (what is more) God does in fact sometimes suddenly take away human life. Korah and all his companions died suddenly and unwarned. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah died without the slightest warning. The seventy thousand who fell by the plague when David numbered the people, died without the slightest warning. And thus God may take any one's life if He pleases, without giving him a moment's warning. Does not this very frequently happen? Which of us can have come to the middle of human life, without noticing many such instances, in which persons have been summoned into eternity without the slightest warning? Several instances in the circle of my own friends and relations come to my mind at this moment, in which the healthy and the strong have been called out of life with little warning or none. Persons have dropped down dead in the streets;

persons who went to bed healthy have been found dead in the morning ; some have died in an instant, in their chair, sitting down to a meal ; some in our own day have fallen dead even in the pulpit. People die just when God pleases ; and with such warning, or none, as He determines. And this without any known rule. Those die, whose lives are most important ; the heads of families, who have many dependent upon them ; those who are most loved ; those who are clinging most to life. Those die, who are the least prepared ; those by whom apparently there has been no preparation at all made for eternity, are still suddenly carried off. Thus God shows, that He does, when He pleases, take away human life without any warning.

But further than this ; God has given us grounds to apprehend, that if a man is depending on future years without reference to His will, and is expecting earthly enjoyment in contempt of that which is spiritual and heavenly, he has reason to dread lest God should say of him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." We are taught this most plainly by the parable of the barren fig-tree. Our Lord there describes a person, who ought to have been serving God for years and who has not served Him ; and He declares of such a man that he may have his time for awhile prolonged, and that God may let him alone for awhile to see whether he would serve Him, and that as soon as that time is past, then the sentence is to be pronounced, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Now when may a person expect that that respite should terminate, that that opportunity should be complete, and that that sentence should go forth? When the Canaanites were for awhile preserved, this is the account given of the reason why they were preserved—"the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." There was an amount of sin which God would still endure ; His patience should last for awhile, till that amount of sin was completed, and then they should be cut off. When the Jews, after having rejected our blessed Saviour, continued still to persecute His

apostles and His disciples, the apostle St. Paul gives this account of their constant opposition—"Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway;" there was an amount of sin which God would endure, after which His patience should last no longer, and they were fast filling it up ; very speedily it was filled up, and the vengeance came. After the amount of the permitted evil of the Canaanites was full, after they had sinned as much as God would permit, they were cut off ; and when the Jews had sinned as much as God would endure them in sinning, they were cut off too. Now which of us can say, when his amount of iniquity may be full? God, in His extreme mercy, allows to persons a certain time ; and they know not when that time will end. He will bear with a certain amount of sin ; and not one of us, considering all the advantages he has had, can say when that is complete. But when it is complete, then as (our Lord taught us) we have reason to expect the sentence—"Cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground?" And indeed is not that what is told us in this passage itself. Why did our Saviour, with a view to instruct those that were living in worldliness and unconcern, say that the rich man heard this sentence from the Almighty, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee?" It would be nugatory, if it were not to intimate to us that each man in similar circumstances may expect that such a sentence should be pronounced on him. And he therefore, who is living in ungodliness among us, who disregarding the blessings of eternity is reckoning on future years for earthly enjoyment, has evidently reason to anticipate, that when he is least expecting it God may say to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Now let me, my dear friends, beseech you to lay this solemn consideration to heart. You are in the hands of the almighty God, who determines your time to stay upon earth just as He pleases. You have offended Him ; you are offending Him constantly. And He has shown you now,

that there is reason to anticipate that He should when you are least expecting it, and while your health is firm, and while you are saying, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"—He should say "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Let me now, in the third place, ask you solemnly to consider how unwise it is, for a person under such circumstances to live unprepared for eternity.

Since of the human family two on an average (a fraction more than two) pass into eternity each minute, therefore we have reason to think, that while I have been speaking to you to-day not a few of our fellow-creatures have hastened into eternity, and have gone before their Maker; and perhaps some one among these may have been just the character described in this passage. Perhaps just while I have been speaking, has God said to some one, who was counting on future years and saying to himself "Eat, drink, and be merry"—"Thou fool, thy soul is required of thee!"

Let us consider the folly of that man. Let us suppose (which I fear is not improbable) that some such spirit has this morning hastened into eternity, and has gone to give an account before God of his wasted life, without having one minute to repent or any disposition to repent.

God has said to him, "Thou fool!" How emphatically does He thus describe the insanity of such a course! *It was folly to live as he did; because he could not retain, one moment beyond the appointed time, all the possessions and enjoyments which he idolised, and while he was calculating upon years of enjoyment, God was about to summon him to His presence. It was folly to calculate on that which was not his. It was folly, in dependence upon that earthly happiness, to throw away such a great salvation. It was folly of such a man, when he might have been interested in Christ and might have had a share in all the great blessings of the Gospel, not so much as to ask God that he might obtain*

them. It was folly, to expose himself to eternal punishment, which would prove intolerable and was so near at hand. It was folly, to expose himself to the wrath of an almighty Being, who knew all that he was doing, in whose hand his breath was, and whom he was insulting and offending every day. It was greater folly, if that man had the opportunity of knowing all this, if he was often invited to the Gospel, if he was often warned of the danger of his course, if he knew the certainty that it would end in ruin, if he had deep convictions that he was wrong, if he purposed at some future period to amend and repent and reform and turn to God. Then it was greater folly—considering how he knew all this, it was greater folly—to live in those habits, that must one day be broken off. And at last God has said to him, "Thou fool! this day thy soul is required of thee."

And if we speak of a supposed case, which may have been, which of you, my unconverted hearers, may not be the next? Of which may it not next be said? It may perhaps, before this day is over, be the description which applies to some one in this congregation. For none of us can tell—the Almighty exclusively determines—how soon He may call some of you to give an account of such a wasted life, none of us can tell.

Let me, then, in conclusion, earnestly exhort you to realise this solemn truth; and let every careless person feel this in his inmost soul—"It may be me; my turn may be the next to stand before my Maker, and He may now be preparing that sentence for me, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

If so, let me exhort you, my dear hearer, as you would not look with the deepest regret upon the whole of life, that you will not depend henceforth upon future time. The present is yours; but you have no right to reckon on the future. Under God, regarding His will, it may be wise to provide for future years; but it must be with strict subordination to Him, who determines all events according to His pleasure. This is the account that God Himself has given

you in this matter ! “ Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” Do not reckon to-morrow your own ; for it is God’s. Do not exult in your possessions, as though you could keep them for a single day ; but own that all time is in His hands, and “ thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” You know not what Divine Providence may do with you while you live ; you know not how soon that Providence may summon you into eternity. Listen too to the Divine admonition given to you in the New Testament ; “ Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain ; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life ? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.” Thus referring to Him, it may be wise to lay your plans for some years to come ; but if you make those calculations without regard to Him, it is irreligious, it is atheistic in principle, and can only be expected to bring upon you the Divine displeasure. Rather then, my dear hearers, join in that prayer of the psalmist, so wise, and often so blessed, “ So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” That shows us, that it is the tendency of “ numbering our days” to lead men to “ apply their hearts to wisdom ;” and did you but earnestly believe, fully believe, that God Almighty may at any period number your days, it is probable you would at last be led to “ apply your heart to wisdom.” And if that conviction now takes hold of your understanding, if you, my careless hearers, feel that it is probable that God may when you are least thinking of it call you into eternity, either this year or the next or you know not when, I trust it may be the means He employs to lead *your* hearts to wisdom.

And *how* ought you then to “ apply them to wisdom ?” Listen to the exhortation, which God has given you, in the second chapter of the book of Proverbs ; “ My son, if thou wilt receive My words, and hide My com-

mandments with thee, so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding ; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” You must obtain an acquaintance with your Maker—a spiritual, experimental and saving acquaintance with Him. You must know God ; you must find spiritual wisdom ; you must be taught of the Holy Spirit. Then apply your hearts to it now. Seek it with more earnestness than you seek earthly good. Labour for it as for hid treasure. Cry earnestly to God to impart it to you. And the promise is that it shall be yours. That direction, given to us in the book of Ecclesiastes on this subject, is invaluable ; “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.” If you have but a little time, use that little time well. If you can call only the present yours, use that present to prepare for eternity. And if you feel that you must at some time be converted, that you must believe in Christ, you must be changed in heart and habits, you must be His true servants, you must have your affections set on things above, at some time or another, then seek to have it all done now. *Now* is the best time, because now is the only time that you can call your own. Whatsoever you have to do “ do it with your might” because you have but a little time in which you may do it. Seek these blessings with resolution ; seek them by every effort in your power to make, with every sacrifice to which you can be called. Seek them by earnest prayer. Seek them with a resolute disposition to sweep away every obstacle to the possession of the best blessings. Seek them with constancy. For if your hearts are impressed now and you feel a momentary earnestness, it may soon all pass away like the early dew ; soon perhaps you will wonder, why you could be so concerned about your souls ; and therefore seize this moment as it flies.

Now — now, while you have life still spared, while you have your faculties still bright, while your minds are impressed with the importance of eternity—let me beseech you, do with all your might that great work, which God gives you to do; seek that you may find in Christ the salvation of your souls, with present peace and future glory.

But lastly, this passage, if pre-eminently calculated to instruct the careless, is also most salutary to Christ's disciples. For let us remember, that all are in danger of expecting too much from this present world, and reckoning with something of irreligious certainty on future years. Our Lord, describing His whole professing church, did not describe only the "foolish virgins" as slumbering and sleeping because the Bridegroom delayed His coming, but He described them *all* as slumbering and sleeping; showing to us the vast danger there is, that we should all set our affections far too much on earthly things, and put to a greater distance than we ought the things of eternity, and think there is more of time remaining for us, in which to accomplish those great duties which God has enjoined upon us here. And therefore Christians as well as others should listen to their Lord's command, given at the close of that parable—"Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." Let me beseech you, my Christian friends, to keep your lamps burning brightly. Trim them from day to day. Guard against

the prevailing and general danger of slumbering and sleeping, because you do not think the Lord is coming. Take care to have your views of Christian doctrine clear, to realise the great promises and threatenings of the Gospel from day to day. Take care to maintain in lively exercise the religious affections you have attained—your godly reverence, your fear of the Divine displeasure, your tenderness of conscience, your humiliation on account of sin, your desire of the Divine glory, your delight in God, your gratitude for redeeming love; keep them in lively exercise from day to day. Take care that faith is every day strengthened by meditation on the promises, and upon what God is to you and what He has declared that He will be. Take care to maintain dutiful habits towards your Maker and your Monarch, each day being found in His service, that whenever the Lord comes, at evening or at midnight or at the cock-crowing, He may still find you ready, accomplishing His work. Day by day do all as to that Master, to whom you must give account. While others are asleep, take care that you be not. And thus may this admonition of our text be as salutary to the disciples of Christ, as it is to the others; and if the careless and the unconverted among us will not lay to heart those solemn admonitions that the Redeemer has given us, at least His own people may be stirred up to greater watchfulness, decision, constancy, and carefulness for their own welfare and for the welfare of those around them.

SERMON XII.

THE UNCONVERTED WARNED BY THE REMORSE OF THE LOST.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCT. 6, 1839.

“Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself; and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. And he cast down the thirty pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.”—Matthew xxvii. 3—5.

WHILE Judas, who was besotted with the lust of money, was pursuing the attainment of those thirty pieces of silver, they seemed to him so desirable that for their sake he was willing to encounter all hazards. The loss of reputation, of the favour of his Master, of the friendship of his fellow-disciples, of the good opinion of all honest men—the Divine anger, and any other consequences which might follow—seemed to him things to be despised in comparison with that gain. And he therefore determined on obtaining that money, though he must do it by the most treacherous cruelty and by the most base hypocrisy.

He obtained that money. And no sooner was it his, than his feelings underwent a total change. He had got all that he desired, but he could not use it. By his help Jesus Christ was seized by His enemies; through him, He was treated barbarously, and then condemned. Judas had now leisure for reflection. He knew that this was the Messiah of God; he had seen His miracles, he had heard His doctrine, he had witnessed His holy life, he had shared His friendship, he had taught in His name, he had cast out devils through His power; he knew that He was God's Messiah, and after having been treated with unexampled patience and kindness by the Lord, he had now betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies. At once his guilt rushed upon his mind. He saw that which he had committed in its true light—as he did not see it previously. He perceived something of the character of his hypocrisy, his cruelty, his ingratitude, his injustice, his ungodliness. And it filled him with horror. He

had now leisure to survey the consequences too of his crime. How would the omniscient God regard it? What would the Saviour think of that conduct? How would his fellow-disciples condemn him for it? In what light would all honest and humane men regard it? Nay, with what contempt would the very priests regard the vile tool of their malicious wickedness? Henceforth an outcast from society, separated from all his former associates, harassed by Satan, deserted by God, a prey to remorse—what life remained for him? How could he use the money thus acquired? He loathed the sin; he loathed the gain, for which he had committed it; and unable to bear the very sight of the money which he had thus acquired, he went and offered it again to those wicked men who gave it. They were unwilling to receive it; and he “cast it down in the temple.” And then, unable to endure that tumult of a heart that could feel its guilt and yet not repent—a prey to the most fearful remorse—unable to endure intolerable anguish—he plunged at once into eternity.

I hope, my beloved friends, that no one in this congregation will ever be placed in the situation of that man, or ever meet his experience. But every unconverted sinner is tending directly to it; he is in the straight road to this experience. And if our nature remains after death the same (as I think you will see reason to believe before this discourse is finished), there is no unconverted sinner that shall come under the punishment due to his sins in eternity, who will not share in those feelings of the apostate.

I have used other arguments, my beloved friends, to induce you to lay to heart your fearful condition, if you are still unchanged by grace; and I will now add this. I will try to depict to you something of that remorse, which you will experience as soon as your day of mercy is over, if that day of mercy is not well used.

Alas! notwithstanding every invitation, argument and appeal, *men will go on in a course of ungodliness; men will resist all mercy, and die as they live.* As soon as this brief course is over, then at once they come into the condition of Judas. That is like him they have lost all the pleasure of sin; like him they endure the punishment of sin; like him they are without hope of forgiveness. And placed in those circumstances, they must experience his unavailing and torturing remorse.

If our nature remains the same (and we have no reason whatever to suppose that it will be changed), then by the known principles of that nature each person that is brought into his circumstances must experience his agony of mind. And there appear therefore to be two things which are as likely to be suffered by each unconverted person that dies unpardoned, as they were suffered by him. First, each such person will know sin as Judas knew it; and secondly, each such person will hate sin as Judas hated it.

Oh! let us all beseech the infinite God, the God of mercy and compassion, that if this description *must be realised by many*, it may not be by any here—that at least those who have chosen to listen to it, drawn I trust to listen to it by the merciful providence of God, may through that very instrumentality escape the reality. Otherwise, my friends, it is but useless pain. It were better to dream on of the happiness of the other world, and to hope still for a felicity that never can be yours, if when the real sufferings to which each sinner is exposed are depicted, you will not be moved by the consideration to turn to God. That is the grand end to be sought; and listen this evening to the remorse, which will eventually accompany unpardoned sin, that it may compel you to turn to God. When

our blessed Saviour was on earth, describing the blessings of the Gospel under the parable of the wedding feast, He represented the Almighty in that parable as sending forth His servants to “compel those to come in” to His wedding, who were in the highways and hedges—to urge them by the most moving arguments they could to seek a share in those great blessings. Oh! that the hour of that compulsion were come, for at least *some* souls here; and if assured that a course of ungodliness does lead to this misery which I am describing, oh! that without any delay and without any hesitation they might seek in good earnest to turn to their Creator and their God!

First, my brethren, the sinner in the next world will know the character of sin, as Judas knew it. Here men cannot judge of sin aright, because they are ensnared by the gain and by the pleasure that accompany it. Resolved to seek that which sin offers them they therefore will not judge of it aright. Their imagination is dazzled by its charms: their heart is set upon what it offers; and it blinds them, just as the hope of that money blinded Judas before it was his. And as he could not *then* judge of the character of his sin, while he could not but judge of it afterwards, so the sinner now, pursuing those objects which a course of ungodliness promises to him and which religion seems to deprive him of, cannot judge of guilt aright; but those gains and pleasures passed, there is nothing henceforth to prevent a just judgment with respect to the guilt of sin and with respect to its consequences.

As soon as he had committed the sin, and he had obtained all that it promised, and he had found that promise delusive and the pleasure momentary and vile, he then (as I have mentioned) judged aright of sin. And so will the unpardoned sinner. Not as the Christian views it, when freely forgiven, he sees all its ingratitude and villainess—pardoned and blessed and saved—so as to make him hate it; but he will see it as Judas saw it, as a hardened reprobate *may* see it—by the clear cold inductions of the understanding while the heart remains

hard. Sinners will then assuredly see all the forbearance and mercy, with which God favoured them while they were on earth. They will recal the many years during which they slighted His mercy and abused His benefits. They will remember that He gave them understanding, and thought and conscience, and the revelation of His will. They will be reminded then, that there was an atoning sacrifice, and an interceding Saviour, and the Spirit of God ready to bless them, and the path to heaven laid open, and the blessings of eternity offered—and they rejected them all. They will then judge somewhat rightly of the reasons why they so rejected them. They will see how momentary, how delusive, how vile, how criminal those gains and pleasures were, for which they clung to a course of ungodliness. They will then remember how they shunned the society of Christ's people—how they neglected His appointed ordinances, or with what hardness of heart they repelled their salutary influence. They will remember then how many mercies they abused—the convictions they stifled, the emotions they trifled with, the resolutions they broke. And all this will show them, just as similar reflections showed to Judas, the character of their guilt.

They will also then see the consequences of sin. *Now* a sinner cannot know the glory or the blessedness of the heaven which he despises. He will not meditate upon it; he only half believes it—perhaps even questions its very existence. But *then* (as our Lord has shown us by the account of the rich man and Lazarus) those who are in torment may lift up their eyes, and “see Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom;” that is, they may see something of the glory of the blest. This at least they will know, that they are for ever with God in the presence of the Saviour, enjoying his eternal favour and all that omnipotent love may do to make them happy. They will know at least, that in that blessed region, to which every penitent believer has attained, there is no more curse, no death, no sorrow, no sighing. And then they will see and feel, that they have lost that salvation.

They will know that it has been lost through their own fault; they will be sensible that it is lost for ever. This will show them something of the just consequence, which flows from obstinate ungodliness. They will then also know the eternal punishment which awaits an unpardoned sinner. *Now* they disbelieve it. Either they do not believe that there is a condition so awful, as that which Christians describe to them and as the Word of God declares, or they disbelieve that that punishment will be theirs; they think that there is something of exaggeration and fiction in all this account of the sufferings of the lost, or at least that it cannot be intended for persons so estimable as they. But, alas! they will feel it then. They will then doubt no more. How should the poor sinner doubt, when he has felt the billows of that fiery lake roll over him? When he has endured the gnawing of that worm that never dies, he cannot question its existence, for he is feeling it. When he is lying crushed under that intolerable weight of anguish he will not then reason about the impossibility of the Almighty thus punishing a sinner. Unbelief will then pass away. He will feel that his sins deserve it, because he will see that his sins have brought it. And then alas! he will know too, that that punishment is for ever. You may conceive how he will cast his eyes about that dungeon of the lost, to see if any where he may escape! and he will find no means. He will see then that it is impossible to pray—that God hears prayer no longer—not because He is an unmerciful God, but because justice demands that punishment. His doom will seem the more intolerable, because conscience will repeat to him again and again for ever—It is all deserved. And thus he will then know by bitter experience, what it was to brave so rashly the curse of an omnipotent God; he will then know something of the consequence of sin, as he knows its guilt.

And this will, in the next place, lead him (like Judas) to hate sin and every thing connected with it. *Now* he loves it—fondly

loves it. It is for its sake, for the sake of its gain and its pleasure, that he will not turn to God. He shrinks from religion, solely because it threatens to deprive him of the enjoyments that sin brings with it. Therefore he will not be a disciple of Christ ; Therefore he turns away from all offered mercy ; fastened down to the things of time and sense, and incapable of desiring or seeking the things that are above. But all this will be passed *then*. There is no more gain or pleasure in hell. There will not be there any more wealth or power, to be acquired. Splendour and ostentation will be gone then. There is no more revelry and mirth, and wine, and dancing and song there. In that eternal state of the lost, there is nothing more to delight the fancy, to gratify the senses, to please the heart. All that makes a sinner love ungodliness now, will have passed away for ever. And therefore he will be in a condition to hate the sin, which he now so doats upon. Yet bear in mind, that it will not be that hatred, with which the penitent believer is inspired, when at last he finds peace in Christ ; not that contrite sorrow for sin, that detestation of its baseness, which is connected with a sense of the pardoning mercy of God, which springs from a heart now made holy, which is combined with gratitude and hope and peace in the Redeemer. That were a blessed emotion ; could it reach hell, it would no longer be true that there was no drop of water to cool the burning tongue. Could a sinner thus hate sin, all would not be lost even there. But the heart is hard there ; the heart is utterly dried and impenitent ; there is no contrition, there is no hatred of sin like that. But a sinner *may* hate sin because of its consequences, just as Judas hated it, when he thought of his guilt and "went and hanged himself" because he could not bear the burden. And thus the sinner *will* hate it. He will hate it, because he feels the intolerable curse that it has brought upon him. Imagine one of our fellow-creatures now, for some disgraceful conduct, driven from society, his character blasted, and his fortune ruined ; how would that man henceforth look upon

that conduct ? He would not even bear the mention of it ; he would endeavour to obliterate it entirely from his memory ; it would pursue him, like a detestable phantom ; he would hold it in utter abhorrence—because of its consequences. And that is the character of the miserable sinner in hell. He now will see what sin has reduced him to ; he will feel an utter detestation of those habits that have brought him down to ruin, when that detestation is useless and unavailing.

He will then hate no less all the gains and the pleasures, which once allured him to sin. What will they then seem to him ? Utterly insignificant, momentary, and vile. He will wonder how he *could* have been so besotted, as for a moment's trivial indulgence to put to hazard the eternal interest of an undying soul. And he will loathe them, for having tempted him so to violate his Maker's will, and live and die His enemy.

But his hatred will not be exhausted there. As Judas undoubtedly hated the priests, who had urged him on to betray his Divine Master, the sinner in hell will hate the companions of his wickedness. All those who now encourage him in ungodliness, all those for fear of whom or friendship of whom he lives in ungodliness, will then seem to him utterly odious. They tempted him to sin, they encouraged him in iniquity, they helped to hinder him turning to God in earnest ; and therefore he will *hate them* then. If one, who for his crimes against his country's laws was sentenced to a violent death, on his road to execution should see smiling among the crowd the worthless wretch, who had first drawn him into crime, had strengthened every evil propensity and blasted every good one, what a look of intense hatred would he cast upon him ! what a burning curse would he breathe upon that tempter as he passed him, supposing his own heart unchanged, his own mind tortured with remorse and apprehension—feeling that he was ruined for both worlds and seeing his seducer there ! *Such greetings* will the damned hold in hell. They have hoped

each other down to ruin; and they will be each other's torturers for ever.

Nay more; as Judas probably felt the keenest irritation: when he thought of his fellow-disciples, so blest in the favour of the Lord and all condemning his crime, the sinner in hell will feel a hatred of those blessed saints, whom Divine mercy has raised to heaven. They will be happy, and *he* wretched; and their happiness will be a title to his hatred. They will be good and be evil; and their goodness will compel him to abhor them. Why did Satan, not content with his own ruin, not satisfied with the damnation he had brought upon himself—why did he enter Eden, and when he saw our happy and holy parents why did his devilish malice urge him to bring them down to ruin? He abhorred their goodness, he abhorred their happiness, and their goodness and their happiness compelled him to seek to make them miserable, though it enhanced to all eternity his own misery. And such is the very nature of a lost soul. He will hate those who are so happy and so good, while he is so miserable and so wicked. But besides this, remember, the saints in glory will justify their Maker's decisions. His judgment will seem to them holy and just and good; and the miserable outcast from God and heaven will know that the whole universe, holy and happy, condemns him for his sins. He will find pity no where; at least not such pity, as is incompatible with the serene and perfect satisfaction, with which the whole holy universe will regard the justice, the wisdom and the goodness of God in his destruction. And *that* must make him hate them.

Nay, it were well for him if he hated *them* alone. But who has placed him in that misery? Who holds him there? Who will not listen to the cry of his wretchedness? Who will not bestow on him pardoning mercy or converting grace? Who is the omniscient Avenger, whose eye is on him incessantly and from whom it is impossible to escape? With whose omnipotent curse is his very soul transfixed, and that for ever? It is God's. And though God is holy and just and good, and he

knows it, and he will justify his Maker, and he cannot but acknowledge that all is right, yet when he feels thus miserable and knows that the Almighty has justly ruined him, I feel assured that he will hate and blaspheme his God; as we read in that passage, to which I have already adverted, of those sinners, who when plagued for their sins "blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores." Such will be the lamentable condition of the lost.

But then, lastly, with what feelings must such a ruined creature at last come to regard *himself*? Every other hatred will centre there. With what intense feelings of remorse will he curse the folly, that has brought him to that place of torment! Who was it, that rejected the clearest truths? Who was it, that would not employ the most powerful means? Who made him turn away from prayer, and from reading the Scriptures, and from the offered mercy of God? Who compelled him to reject the Divine Saviour, and hindered him from ever once seeking with all his heart the gracious and transforming influence of the Spirit of God? Who made him seek the society of the wicked, and made him leave the society of the good? He did it all himself; he chose to be miserable. Many among them did it with their eyes open, did it against convictions, did it for long years, did it when they often felt themselves inclined to turn to God, and did it when they knew that the one course led to glory and the other led to misery; but they *would* do it still. And I fear, that in that place of torment there is many a ruined soul, that is now making such a fearful soliloquy as this:—"I am my own destroyer; I have damned my own soul; I have chosen to be an accursed outcast from God; I brought myself here. Oh! insufferable anguish! to lie under this despair for ever, and to know I did it all myself!"

Yes, sinner! be assured of this, that if you do not turn to God before it is too late, there will come over you for ever feelings such as will make the agony which urged Judas to that rash act seem merely

like the little irritation of an infant compared with the agony of a man. You will know it all; you will experience it all.

But God grant, that it may be so with none in this assembly to-night. Oh! let this thought weigh with you in time. My fellow sinners, have pity on your immortal souls, have pity on yourselves, while yet there is time; and use every mournful feeling, which such a subject as this must awaken one should think in all, whose hearts are not already as the adamant—use it to arouse you instantly, to arrest your progress and make you turn to God. Each sinner here should say—If there is not another man on earth that will seek with earnestness to make his way to heaven, I will; if I should be alone on earth, the only one who would listen to the declared will of God, the only one who would seek an interest in Christ—if all my fellow-citizens, if all my fellow-countrymen, if the whole world will rush on to experience and endure this anguish—God helping me, I will endeavour to escape. Oh! that this blessed resolution might arise in the heart of every sinner here! Or if all will not, oh! that at least *some* might listen!—that at least some one, some two or three, some few, hitherto careless, would anticipate what a very few years, what possibly a very few days, may bring them to experience! Do I ask you, my dear friends, an unreasonable thing, when I only bid you try to anticipate now the feelings, which very shortly will rush like a resistless torrent over your souls? If you will think of sin thus through countless ages, whether you choose or not, why not think of it so now? If you *must* think of sin thus through ages uncounted, when the thought will be useless to you, will you not think of it so now when it may bring you to salvation? If you *will not*, why then I had better be silent on these awful topics; I had better bid you

still slumber on in your carelessness and hope of happiness, if you will not be aroused to escape. But, my dear hearers, if you will but listen and reflect, God may make this the “hammer” that at last “breaks your heart in pieces,” and brings you to submit to His awful majesty—or rather to His infinite mercy. For when I ask you to submit to God, it is not to One, who has not mercy to bestow; it is not to One, who cannot save; it is not to One, who delights in your ruin. He is “waiting to be gracious.” And would you but see in time what infinite love and justice demand, and how the mercy of God has warned you of it for the very purpose that you might escape, methinks you would be induced at last to turn from it. If you were perfectly convinced that a course of conduct would in a few days destroy all your hopes of earthly happiness, beggar you for the whole of life, make you an undone wretch to your dying day, would you continue that course? would you enter on it this evening? And if you are equally persuaded, that ungodliness *must* in a few years bring you to a worse ruin, plunge you in a more bottomless perdition, then I cannot but hope that at least it will induce some to seek a refuge in Christ, and to find in the only Saviour of sinners a peace they never otherwise can know.

Dear friends, use this knowledge so. Do lay it to heart this evening in going from this house of prayer. Weigh well what the remorse will be, that will seize upon your souls in a very short time, if you do not turn to God. And while you resolve to use whatever means you can, accompany that with earnest and constant prayer, that God Almighty will show you now the real character and consequences of sin, so as to prevent your being wrapped in that overwhelming remorse, which will at last seize upon the ungodly.

SERMON XIII.

THE UNCONVERTED WARNED THAT FEW WILL BE SAVED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 13, 1839.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”—Matthew vii. 13, 14.

THE guilt which lies upon the head of every unconverted sinner is so great, that if he be not pardoned and renewed, it must weigh him down to a punishment, which is intolerable and eternal. And that punishment, we have seen, is near. Any day God may, if he please, terminate the sinner's unprofitable life, and call him to his last account.

But it may be thought by some, that this dreadful doom must be reserved only for a few—for those, who have surpassed other men in wickedness and resisted Divine mercy more than other men, and whom it may be right to select as monuments of the vengeance of God, while the great majority may be saved. They may think therefore that *they* do not come within the threatened class, but that notwithstanding they have not been so religious as they ought to be, they may hope for the mercy of God with the great majority. How many, then, we have to ask, will be saved? Is it the great majority of those, who ever hear the Gospel?

The text gives us a very plain and a very awful answer to that question. “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” The way to hell is stated to be broad and thronged by multitudes; the way to heaven is declared by Him, who never lies, to be very narrow and trodden by few.

May the consideration of this awful truth lead each ungodly person in this congregation to hearken to our Saviour's merciful direction—for which He announced this solemn truth; and as He has here urged upon them, may they “enter in at the

strait gate,” that they may be found among the “few” that are saved, and not among the “many” who are lost.

In order to lead (with the blessing of God) some at least in this congregation to make that decision and to make it now, let us consider, first, some scriptural statements with respect to the smallness of the number of those who are saved; and then let us observe some reasons for this awful fact; at the same time looking up to God that He would bless it to every soul, quickening to greater earnestness those who have grown careless in His service, and leading to a prevailing desire after salvation those who are still in danger of perishing.

I. First, my brethren, let us notice some scriptural statements upon this subject.

It is enough to give us fearful intimation of the large numbers who will eventually perish, to consider how many *have* on different occasions perished miserably in their sins under the apparent wrath of God. When the world was destroyed by a deluge, there were but eight persons who escaped; all the others being overwhelmed by the wrath of God. When the world had fallen into general idolatry, there was but one family called to be the depositaries of the Divine mercy. When God sentenced to destruction the four cities of the plain, only Lot with his two daughters were saved by the mercy of God. Of all the adults that left Egypt for the promised land, two only, Caleb and Joshua, were ever permitted to see it; the others perished miserably in the wilderness. In the days of Elijah, seven thousand only remained of the whole nation of Israel, that were still the worshippers of God, the rest being involved in a destructive idolatry. And

when, after repeated trials and repeated judgments upon that nation, at length the promised Saviour came, of whom the prophets had spoken for many centuries, expected by all the church with eager interest—when the eternal Son of God came down and assumed our nature, spake as “never man spake,” lived as never man lived, and wrought astonishing miracles to convince the most incredulous of His mission—after thirty-three years in which He tabernacled amongst men, this is the account we have of His reception; “He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.” The fruits of His personal ministry on earth seem to be comprehended within about five or six hundred disciples, out of the millions with which the world was peopled.

These being awful facts, showing how the Lord has punished multitudes for their sins, let us notice some passages of Scripture, which speak of the prospects of the world. St. John assures us, that “the whole world lies in wickedness.” St. Paul has told us, that it is enough to mark any one to be a “child of wrath” that he “walks according to the course of this world.” He has in another place exhorted believers, “not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds,” into a spirit and temper, into aims and habits, distinct and opposite to those of the world.

If from the state of the world we turn our attention to the condition of the nominal church of Christ, those who are called by His name, we find similar statements respecting them. When the Lord Jesus Christ described the state of His universal professed people, He spoke of them as “likened to ten virgins,” of whom “five were foolish” and were to be excluded from the presence of the Bridegroom; intimating assuredly what vast numbers amongst those who profess to belong to Him shall be found to be destitute of religion, and be shut out from His presence when He comes. Above

all, in that very remarkable and very awful parable which we have this day read,* He has shown us how the Gospel would be received in the world; there He declared, that the blessings which it contained would be received as the offer of that wedding feast was received. Numbers would “make light of it,” and go to “their farm” and “their merchandise” in preference; numbers would bitterly hate both it and all who professed to desire it; and many more, seeming to belong to that body of guests, would still be rejected, because they renounced the essential conditions upon which it was offered; and this would happen in the case of so many, that compared with the number of the lost, the number of the saved would be few—“For many are called, but few chosen.”

According to these prophetic intimations what has been in fact the history of the professed church of Christ? We know what fierce opposition it met with in the world from the first. We know too how early corruption defaced the church itself. In the second century even, were the foundations manifestly laying for that fearful apostacy, which has since corrupted nearly the whole professed church of Christ. At that time ceremonies began to multiply, and corruptions in doctrine went hand in hand with similar corruptions in practice; and that progress in defection from the truth and simplicity of the Gospel fearfully proceeded through the third and fourth centuries, till at length the professed church of Christ became so corrupt, that the children of God seemed hardly to be found upon the earth. Up to this day, the large portion of those who bear the name of Christ are awfully corrupted. The churches of Rome, of Greece, of Abyssinia—the Syrian, the Coptic, and the Syriac churches in Hindostan—are all of them debased by frightful superstitions, have forgotten the Scriptures, scarcely ever hear the Word of God expounded to them, are trusting for their salvation to silly rites, and forgetting the great “Mediator between God and man” are looking to imaginary mediators

for their safety, while, eighteen hundred years after the Gospel has been preached, three-fourths of the world have scarcely the slightest knowledge of the name or history of Christ.

But we need not look even to *them*. Amongst the comparatively few, to whom a purer faith has been preached and who have had the privilege of reading the Word of God, is it not a fact painfully notorious, that the vast majority are living in open ungodliness, totally disregarding the care of their souls, living as though they had to give no account to their Maker, scorning openly the blessings of the Gospel, despising and defying its threatening, and spending a fugitive and trifling existence as though existence were to pass with this frail life?

The history, then, of the universal church of Christ has proved, that the way to hell is broad and thronged by multitudes—the way to heaven narrow and trodden by few. And oh! my brethren, it would be well, if all those that made even a serious profession of the Gospel, were found amongst that “few.” It would be a happy thought, could I believe that all who are present here now were numbered amongst that “few.” But even when we restrict that little circle to those, who make a profession of Christ which seems true! alas! it will be found perhaps that even among them—perhaps it will be found in the disclosures of the great day that still even among them—many were treading in the broad way, and few had found the narrow.

II. Let me now give you some reasons for this awful fact; which may (I trust) serve to lead each person, who is in danger of eternally perishing, to discover his true position, and find out in which of these roads he is himself travelling.

In the first place, in order to observe why so many tread the broad road and so few are walking in the narrow, we must bear in mind what it is to be saved, or what it is to walk in that narrow way. In order to be saved, a sinner must be forgiven. And this he can only be (as we have often seen) through the mercy of God for the sake of Jesus Christ; this is the one solitary rea-

son why a sinner is forgiven. Hence then to be forgiven, a sinner must believe in Christ as the only Saviour of his soul from eternal death. He must be brought to see that he is exposed to eternal death, and must own it—or else he can never trust in that Redeemer; he must be brought to repent of those sins which he acknowledges and simply to accept Christ as his only hope, yielding himself up to the government of Christ while he trusts in His righteousness. And in the next place, a sinner (to be saved) must be brought to glorify God whom he has dishonoured, and to be prepared for that eternal life, for which at present in his unregenerate state he is totally unfitted; and in order to be brought to this, he must be rendered holy in heart and principle, he must be brought to obey (habitually and steadfastly to obey) the will of God, and to do this with grateful affection—without which he never can either glorify his Maker, or be fitted for the eternal world. And then that this may take place in him, he must be changed by Divine grace, since no one, who is not under the governing influence of the Spirit of God, is ever brought to this repentance for sin, this full acknowledgment of guilt, this trust in the Redeemer, this holy and loving obedience to the will of God. Now this is a course of life and of feeling, which numbers of the ungodly cannot endure. They cannot bear the thought, that they must confess sin and repent of it; they cannot endure the thought of being saved wholly by dependence on the merit of Christ; they cannot endure a course of life, which threatens to change their habits, which requires a holiness of which they have nothing. Instead of loving God, they feel that they are alienated from God. Instead of being heavenly-minded, they are altogether earthly-minded, and cannot bear the thought of depending exclusively on Divine grace to effect this great change. Thus they continue in their sins. Numbers cannot attain to that life, which yet is essential to a sinner's acceptance and eternal happiness.

Let us now observe some reasons why they thus reject this method of salvation.

Those reasons are exceedingly general and powerful.

In the first place, I may notice the prevailing ungodliness of our fallen state. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And this of itself is enough to hinder the vast majority from receiving the Gospel when it is presented to them. They have no inclination to turn to God. They do not love Him or His ways, but are turned from Him; and therefore that method of salvation, which He has revealed, is at once distasteful to them.

But this ungodliness of nature is made up of many particulars, which are exceedingly powerful motives to reject the Gospel; and alas! as prevalent as they are powerful.

One of these, that I will mention, is the natural pride of our hearts. If a man is proud of his understanding, he cannot bear to be told that he is naturally blind to Divine truth, and needs to have his eyes enlightened by the teaching of God, and is himself incapable of perceiving truth savingly; and therefore he rejects that doctrine. A man that is proud of his self-control and philosophical resolution, cannot endure to be told that he is helplessly criminal and vile, that he has no power to change his own heart and that he must look to God to change it. A man that is proud of his own good conduct, cannot bear the thought that that good conduct can have no influence on his justification, that in this matter he must come down to the level of the worst of his species, and look to be saved only for the righteousness of another; and he therefore rejects the Gospel, which teaches him this. Thus it is that the method of salvation, which God has revealed, mortifies human pride; the apostle speaking of it thus—"Where is boasting then? it is excluded; by what law? of works? nay, but by the law of faith." This is so distasteful to the pride of the human heart, that men in general are like those Jews, of whom the apostle wrote with tears—"They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

Another very prevailing cause, why but few are saved, is the worldliness of our fallen condition. Sometimes this appears in the prevailing love of wealth. Men may, like that rich man of whom we read in the Gospel, have many amiable dispositions, and yet be afraid of that interference with their worldly successes, with which it threatens them, as it threatened him. The Lord Jesus Christ said to him, "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me;" "and he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved, for he had great possessions." He loved his wealth better than he loved salvation. And so many persons now think they perceive in the terms of the Gospel that which shall interfere with their worldly success; and for this, in one way or another, they reject the Gospel. Or they may be like that other rich man mentioned by our Lord, who "was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day," whose heart was upon the "good things of this life," and had no sympathy with the sufferings of others; and choosing thus his portion here, at length he "lifted up his eyes in torment." So many rich men now be so dazzled and enchanted with the splendour and the honours of this world, as to have no taste at all for spiritual religion, no heart even to enter on the examination of its truths. Or they may be like that other rich man mentioned by our Lord in another parable who said, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry"—counting upon their present possessions, for long happiness to come, and therefore disregarding the happiness which the Gospel offers; and thus by the love of wealth, the prevailing worldliness of their spirits, hindered from ever accepting Christ in earnest. How fearful a thing it is, to notice how very few of wealthy men seem even professedly to belong to the flock of Christ, or to have any heart for the blessedness which His Gospel offers! Or it may be, that without that prevailing love of wealth, still their worldliness may appear

in their cares or in their pleasures. Some men there are, who acknowledge that their cares and their anxieties about this world so harass their spirits and engross their thoughts, that now they have no disposition to think about eternity; and they promise themselves, that at some future time, when those cares are lessened and those employments diminished, then they will care about their souls. Others maybe still more criminal, who have abundance of leisure, whose whole life is leisure, and whose leisure is all spent in sin. These are persons devoted to frivolous dissipations, and who cannot endure the Gospel, which threatens to interfere with their prevailing course of life, which summons them to part with all the enjoyment for which they have any present taste, and seems a rigorous and austere system destroying all their worldly enjoyments. Both these classes our Lord said would exist, thus making light of the Gospel feast—one saying that he “had bought a piece of ground and must needs go and see it,” and another that he “had married a wife and therefore could not come.” Both were described by our Lord in that very impressive parable of the sower of the seed, as those who were so entangled with the “cares and riches and pleasures of this life,” that they could “bring no fruit to perfection.”

Besides these, who are thus engrossed with worldly cares and pleasures, there is another class, who are hindered from receiving the Gospel by the fear of their fellow-creatures. Our Lord declared, in the same parable, that there would be such. He likened them to the seed which was cast upon the “stony ground,” which grew for awhile and was then scorched; declaring that in like manner there would be those, who received the Word, but when tribulation or affliction arose on account of the Word, then they would apostatize. Sometimes these persons have a fear of the influence, which their fellow-creatures may have upon their present interests, and dread that loss, to which the enmity, indifference, and contempt of their fellow-creatures may expose them. Sometimes, without anticipating that their worldly interests may suf-

fer, they are afraid of that perpetually harassing ridicule and contempt, to which if they are brought into contact with worldly and irreligious persons, they must day by day be exposed. Or perhaps they may be afraid of the positive enmity and persecution, which a profession of religion would bring with it, and cannot bear the averted looks, the unjust imputation, the violent hatred, to which, if they received the Gospel in sincerity, they might be exposed. These are therefore amongst “the fearful and unbelieving,” of whom the Word of God declares that they must “have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” And how many amongst those that hear the Gospel may be placed amongst this class!

Another very prevailing cause, which will hinder numbers from receiving the Gospel and which will bring them to destruction, is the natural sloth which men indulge in. There is a class of persons, who feel from their youth deprived of moral energy and resolution, who are like reeds floating down the current of human life, with no fixed purpose and no resolute activity for any great object. Now the Gospel calls men to mortify that disposition. Our Lord says, “Strive” (wrestle) “to enter in at the strait gate;” and they are not prepared for the effort. And St. Paul has said, “Let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober;” and they love to slumber on. And they fulfil, alas! those words of Solomon — “A little more sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travaileth, and thy want as an armed man.” While they are thinking only of that easy enjoyment which they have in this world, they find themselves in eternity; and an awful destitution, which no duration will ever relieve, has seized upon them unawares and must last for ever.

To all these fearful causes, acting upon men’s minds to hinder them receiving the Gospel I must add the state of the world in general. For this acts most powerfully upon each individual, hindering him from welcoming the message of salvation. What does he

find in society in general? Almost universal example tempts him to worldliness and irreligion. The prevailing authority of human opinions is against the Gospel. He finds among those who scorn or reject it, and among those who countenance him in his levity and irreligion—first the vast multitude (which of itself animates him to continue in an ungodly course)—and then (as though it were impossible for him to escape) he finds not merely the multitude but those who are raised above the multitude by every distinction with which human nature is adorned. Those of the greatest talent, those of the greatest learning, those whose characters are the most estimable, those whose affections are the most lively, those whose influence is paramount over him, are all combined in that ungodliness, which serves at once to blind, to ensnare, and to enslave.

And then we must add to these the name of that fearful enemy, who “as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour”—with a malice which is never satiated, and an activity which never wearies. That being engaged against them, who filled the heart of Judas, even at the very paschal supper, the very night of our Saviour’s sufferings, and when he witnessed His sorrow to betray Him. That malicious enemy of souls, who “filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Ghost,” is ready to act on theirs. He is termed “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;” besetting each man who disobeys the Divine law, laying siege to his fancy, his understanding, his heart continually. And so general is his influence in the world, that he is termed “the prince of this world,” “the god of this world;” to whom, forsaking the Almighty, they bow down and adore. And so fearful is his influence among men, that however much they have to dread their own lusts and passions, and however much they have to dread the influence of their fellow men, all these are placed by the apostle as though they were insignificant, and he says, “We wrestle *not* against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness

of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” How can poor sinners escape—with all these dispositions to evil from within, with all these inducements to sin from without?

And in truth, as the painful consequence of this evil, we see men in fact in various ways ruin themselves. Some are openly and vehemently opposed to the Gospel; men such as Saul of Tarsus, who may have very great attainments and a strict morality and a high estimate of their own worth, and may be thought highly of by their fellow-men, but who have a burning enmity against the Gospel of Christ; such as our Lord described in that parable, when He said, “The remnant took His servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.” The history of the Church of Christ has marked how large that class has been in various ages; and if the circumstances of society are changed, and if the force of human law protects life and liberty, still human nature is the same, and that class (be sure) exists among us, who have a burning enmity against the Gospel, in proportion (in the first place) to the evidence for the truths which they reject, and (in the second place) to that opposition to their prevailing habits and tastes which the Gospel clearly manifests. There is a larger class, who are led by these evils of their nature and of their lives to slight the blessings of the Gospel, “They make light of it,” as our Lord said; they cannot perceive the blessedness of religion, and cannot now set their hearts upon spiritual and eternal things; they “make light” of those blessings, for which God the Son laid down His life, for which God the Spirit condescends to dwell in the sinner’s heart, the subject of the revelation that God has given, the only blessings that can enrich the soul for eternity—they “make light of them,” and will not take the slightest pains to secure an interest in the salvation Christ has provided. Others there are, who do not violently oppose the Gospel and do not altogether slight its blessings, but they would try to accommodate the Gospel to their own habits and views, just as those Judaizing Christians,

of whom such frequent mention is made in the New Testament. They would alter the Gospel according to the prevailing dispositions of their minds. Some of them would endeavour to accommodate it to the pride of their understanding, explain away its peculiarities, and make it a rational system of ethics rather than a religion revealed by God. Some of them are disposed to flatter their natural self-righteousness, by interpreting the Gospel to teach a justification by human works in part; thereby overturning the whole Gospel of Christ. Some may perhaps accommodate that Gospel to their self-dependence, and believe that the way in which a sinner is to be accepted is by improving his own character first, and thus commending himself to the Divine mercy. All of them thus modify and adulterate the doctrines of the cross to their own ruin. Others there are, who promise themselves that they will embrace the Gospel itself, will receive all those truths they recognise to be from God, but they cannot do it now; they must have a little more pleasure, they must pursue certain objects till they are obtained, they must wait till they are a little older. They will hope, that when sickness comes, that will draw them to God; the afflictions of life, when they tame the natural spirit which is now so buoyant and gay, will perhaps bring them to God; they will be religious at some time, but they cannot now. Like Felix, putting it off to "a convenient season;" and alas! that time never to them comes. *He* had many other opportunities of speaking with the apostle, and hearing about his soul's welfare; but they may never have *one*. Or if it comes, it finds them in an unprepared state, as those occasions found him; and they continue to the last unchanged. And many there are, who do not delay so much, but who deceive themselves, by supposing that they have embraced the Gospel when it is too certain they have not. These are persons, who mistake a natural religion for a work of Divine grace, and the natural emotions of an excited mind for a change of heart—as I shall afterwards have occasion more fully

to describe; and thus they contrive to nurse a delusive hope even to the end, and like the foolish virgins in the parable hope to the very last that they shall be ready when the Bridegroom comes. And then, lastly, another class there is, which seems to set out well in Divine things, but at length apostatises. These are they, of whom our Saviour said, that "for a while they believe and in the time of temptation fall away." They are very earnest about their salvation for a few months, or even years; much excited by the truths of religion, so long as they are novel; seeming to set out in the ways of God, while those around them urge them to do it by a life of piety and by their brotherly exhortations; but when circumstances alter, and they are placed in the midst of an ungodly world, and the novelty of religion is gone, then all these natural (and not gracious) emotions have passed away, and instead of proving to be the subjects of Divine grace, they are only of those who "for awhile believe" and then "fall away."

When we think, then, my brethren, of the many ways in which men may destroy themselves, we may see what our Lord meant, when He said that the road to hell is broad and thronged by multitudes, and the road to heaven is narrow and trodden but by few. We may see how hard it is to enter on a life of godliness, which demands so much humiliation; and how hard it is to continue in a life of godliness, which asks for so much watchfulness and self-denial. And we may see how easy it is to tread the way to hell—that it flatters all the natural feelings of our corrupted hearts, that it indulges all the habits we most wish to cherish, that it flatters pride and self-righteousness, indulges worldliness, allows sloth, and thus hurries multitudes by the easy and the downward road to everlasting ruin.

But if it does appear in fact, and if we see from Scripture and from reason how likely it is to be, that multitudes even of those who hear the Gospel will reject it to their own undoing, my brethren, let me

beseech you all in this congregation to listen to our Lord's exhortation in this passage—"Enter ye in at the strait gate;" or, as it is in the similar passage in St. Luke—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate." And this He said in conjunction (on each occasion) with the very subject which has occupied our thoughts. Why is it that men are to enter? Because the road to heaven is narrow, and the road to hell is broad. Why are men to "strive to enter in at the strait gate?" "One said unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate." That is, it is the very proper answer to that question: it is the business of each man, when he hears or reads that few will be saved, from that moment to "strive to enter"—to take all possible pains, to use every effort, to make every sacrifice, to care that *he* is saved, and never to rest till he knows that his feet are set in that narrow way, along which so few are walking.

Let me then beseech you, my brethren, in the first place, to examine diligently whether you are in that narrow way. And if you have reason to think you are not, because you see no evidences that you have ever repented of sin or thoroughly confessed your guilt before God, that you have ever felt a simple confidence in the Redeemer's merit and intercession and love, that you have ever been brought heartily and gratefully to obey God—if you do not feel that you supremely love Him, and have no habitual heavenly-mindedness of temper—then let me, in the next place, ask you to examine diligently what it is that is making you reject the Gospel, and which is urging you on in the broad way that leads to destruction. That is, ask yourselves most seriously, whether you have an open enmity to the Gospel, or whether you are slighting its blessings, or whether you are endeavouring to modify its painful statements, or whether you are delaying to seek that salvation you should seek now, or whether (not doing any of these) you are still deceiving yourselves with the form of godliness while you deny

its power. And when you have ascertained these points, then endeavour, my brethren, to set yourselves against that peculiar evil which is likely to be fatal to you. And that you may do so, examine further what you conceive to be the peculiar temper of mind, which is now urging you to reject what is essential to your welfare. See whether you are rejecting it because of the pride of understanding, of good conduct, or of resolution. See whether you are rejecting it from a prevailing worldliness of spirit—because you love the things of this world so well, that you have no heart for spiritual blessings. Examine whether you are rejecting it, through the mass of care and anxiety of a worldly kind, which oppresses you. See whether you are rejecting it, because you have contracted a melancholy taste for dissipation. See whether it is wealth or not, which is urging you to reject the Gospel of Christ. Examine how far the world has an influence over your character and conduct and how far you seem to be numbered amongst those, whom Satan "takes captive at his will." And when you find out these points, then, my brethren, set yourselves most diligently to master those evils of your nature and to guard against those prevailing tempers which you have to resist. In the language of our Saviour—"Strive to enter in." Strive to obtain those dispositions, by which you may set out and continue in the road to life. And as you find (as you have found, if you have tried it, and you never will try till you have,) that your strength is weak, that your resolutions are frail, your corruption not to be overcome by human effort, let all these things induce you to seek at the throne of mercy grace to rescue you. Ask the Lord to deliver you from the power of sin. Ask Him to place you among the few that are chosen, and not among the many that are only called—among the few that are taking the road to life, and not the many that are treading the way to death.

On this subject I shall have some awful thoughts to present to you in the evening, drawn from God's Holy Word; but now let me entreat you, even upon this consid-

ration (that there are so few that will be saved), that you will even now listen to our Lord's invitation, and by all means in your power strive that you may be saved. Is it not melancholy to think that it is too probable that in this very congregation, after every appeal that has been made to them or can be, so many still will resolutely tread the downward road that leads to destruction? Too probably not a few here, old or young, rich or poor, will still slight this Gospel—will still delay till it is too late. They will still deceive themselves, notwithstanding the evidences of a Christian state may be set most plainly before them. *You*, my brethren, whom I address, will still be found, in one or all of these ways, rejecting this "great salvation." A few more years—and you will find every hope passed, and every fear outdone.

Beloved brethren, then listen to our

Lord's exhortation. It is *He*, who says to you, "Strive to enter in." Listen to His words. Let them dwell upon your minds. Do not attend to them as to what *I* am saying; but listen to what *Christ* says. He says to you, "*Strive* to enter in." Let that word rest upon your conscience. Go from this house with this feeling—"I will obey the Lord's command, I will "strive to enter in;" it requires effort, and I will exert it; it requires some sacrifice, and I will make it; it requires perseverance, and by His strength I will persevere; whatever He meant by "Strive to enter in," that by His grace I will do.' And never let these simple, most gracious and merciful words pass from your memory, my dear hearers, till you are found in that narrow way, from which, if God once set your feet there, you will never depart again.

SERMON XIV.

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN THE BESTOWMENT OF SALVATION JUSTIFIED TO THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCT. 13, 1839.

"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy; and whom He will, He hardeneth."—Romans ix. 18.

AMONG the various temptations, with which the great enemy of souls assaults ungodly men and leads them on to their ruin, is that of delaying to seek earnestly the grace of God, because they think they can at any time repent, and if for a while they continue in that course which gives them present satisfaction, with their knowledge and with their resolution they may change their habits at any time, and asking for Divine mercy may obtain it. That hope proves, I suppose, in almost all instances, delusive. It is highly dishonourable to God; it is very often fatal to the sinner. And I have therefore chosen this passage, in order to show to any in this congregation, whom it may be misleading and whose eternal welfare it may endanger, how completely fallacious such a hope is.

For how, my brethren, shall a sinner change his course, and become, instead of the alienated enemy of God, His obedient child? The Scripture answers that question thus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." A great moral change then must pass upon each sinner, before he becomes a child of God; and that change is effected by God Himself. If therefore a sinner de-

lay to turn to God and does not seek His grace now, how does he know whether God will ever bestow it? How can he say, without insulting the Divine majesty, that at any moment he may turn and live? If a person supposes that he can command this blessing from God, in any way deserve or by himself secure it, then does our text answer—"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth."

This passage occurs in a statement which the apostle made, to account for the painful fact, that the large majority of his countrymen, though belonging to the most favoured nation under heaven, were in his day rejecters of the Gospel. It filled him with intense sorrow, to observe how many were rushing headlong to destruction. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart; for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Yet though he perceived with intense grief that so many were perishing still he did not conceive on that account that the promises of God had failed. "Not" (he adds) "as though the Word of God had taken none effect." On the contrary, this had been the method of the Divine conduct in all times. "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel;" those who had naturally sprung from Jacob,

were not therefore the chosen people of God ; neither because they were the natural posterity of Abraham, were they all children of God. For first Isaac had been called by the sovereign purpose of God, and Ishmael left (“ In Isaac shall thy seed be called”); then Jacob had been chosen to inherit especial blessings, while Esau had been forsaken ; “ for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger ; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” This choice of Isaac first, and then of Jacob, was to illustrate a general principle of the Divine government ; “ I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” All deserving equally to be outcasts from the favour of God for ever, it was in sovereign mercy alone that He bestowed a blessing upon any. On the other hand, He had an equal right to reject the guilty transgressor as He pleased ; and if sometimes an open enemy of God were raised to great power and dignity in the earth, it might be to manifest His wrath and not His mercy ; “ For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth.” Thus God had established, by all His actual conduct toward that nation, this awful truth—“ Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He harden-eth.”

I will now show to you, my brethren, first, some of those passages of Scripture, which illustrate this doctrine ; and then bring before you some considerations, which serve to show that God may justly leave each ungodly sinner to perish in his sins.

Our Lord in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, recorded in the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, has

brought this awful truth before us. He represents certain labourers as having wrought through the whole day, and other labourers as having wrought but one hour ; and when the evening came that each man was to receive his pay, the owner of the vineyard gave to each man a penny—giving to those who had wrought through the whole day that which was justly their due, giving to those who had wrought but one hour that which was considerably beyond their due. And when this excited the jealousy of the first labourers, the owner answered—“ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ? is thine eye evil, because I am good ?” That parable was constructed by our Saviour to illustrate this truth, with which He concludes—“ So the last shall be first, and the first last, for many be called but few chosen.” The owner of the vineyard was meant to represent the Almighty ; those who received more than was their due were to represent the chosen, and those who received their due were to represent those sinners who are called but not chosen ; and our Lord declared, that such received their due from the justice of God, but that those who were His chosen people received more than their due from His mercy. “ Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ?” As the owner of the vineyard was not bound to bestow his free gifts upon any, but might bestow them as he pleased, the Almighty has a right to bestow His gifts in providence and grace according to His pleasure.

And this is the constant doctrine of the New Testament ; upon which I shall not now enlarge, because the time would not allow it, but shall merely bring before your view three short, plain, explicit passages to that effect. In the first chapter of the first epistle of St. Peter, he thus accounts for the calling and blessedness of God’s people ; “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ;” that change in their nature, through which they laid hold on the salva-

tion provided by the death and resurrection of Christ, was "according to the abundant mercy of God." So St. James declares—"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures;" if the Word of God is made effectual to the change of a sinner's heart, through which he becomes a believer in Jesus and a child of God, it is here said to have been wrought merely of the will and pleasure of God; "of His own will begat He us." And these two thoughts are combined by the apostle St. Paul, in the first chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, where he declares that believers were "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace;" they did not in the least deserve it beyond any other men, they were wholly unworthy of those great blessings, but God had granted them to them to magnify His mercy; and this He did because (there was no other reason for it) it was His own will—"according to the good pleasure of His will."

It were very easy to multiply these passages; but these are sufficient to show the constant doctrine of the New Testament on this subject, which assures us, in the language of our text, that if He has mercy upon any sinner it is because He chooses to have mercy; and if He chooses, He may therefore leave that or any other sinner to perish in his sin. For we must observe, that when it is said in our text, "Whom He will He hardeneth," this merely describes the permission of the Almighty—nothing actually done by Him. He never tempts a sinner to sin; He never inspires a sinner with one corrupt thought, or one corrupt affection; but He leaves the sinner to himself. And that is enough to lead any one to final obduracy and to perish in his sins.

This being the language of Scripture, let me now, my dear hearers, bring before your view some of those considerations, which serve to show to any one, that this is perfectly just—to strip the sinner of all vain excuses, and to leave him (as I trust some of

those who have been hitherto careless will be left) humbled in the hands of a gracious God, seeking mercy and not demanding it, and seeking it with that earnestness with which those who never can deserve anything at His hands should ask for an inestimable and eternal good.

First, my brethren, God is not obliged in any case to pardon any sinner for his good conduct. Imagine that good conduct to be what it may, it is impossible that God should be obliged to pardon any. I have already dwelt upon this subject, and shown you that it is impossible for any sinner to make an atonement for the past. And the very fact that the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven to save us from the consequences of our sins, serves to show that God was not obliged to pardon any sinner for his good conduct. Because, had the Lord Jesus Christ not come, it is manifest that every sinner would have perished, since no one can be saved but through Him; the condition of sinners was such, that all would have perished had He not died for them; and if all would have perished had He not come, they *deserve* to perish now. This is clear and certain, unless we imagine the monstrous doctrine, that God was obliged to send His Son in justice; a blasphemy which I suppose no sinner will entertain. "God so *loved* the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son;" it was the free gift of boundless mercy. And therefore, if that gift was necessary to save sinners from perishing in sin, then does each sinner, who is now out of Christ (to use the Scripture term), equally deserve to perish; and he cannot claim it from the justice of God, that he should be pardoned for his good conduct.

Nor is the Almighty obliged in justice for the sake of Jesus Christ to pardon a sinner remaining still an unbeliever. He is bound by promise to pardon a believer; and it is as impossible that a believer should remain unforgiven, as it is impossible that God should lie. A believer is safe for ever, because he has the promise and oath of God, that secure his eternal well-being. But God has granted no promise to unbelievers—to

those who are destitute of real and saving faith in Christ. So far from blessing them for the sake of Christ, it would be to dishonour His Son and to destroy all the great ends for which Christ died. Each man that disbelieves in Christ, has, in addition to all his original guilt, this further guilt of rejecting the boundless love of God. And that alone would be enough to sink him to the lowest abyss of destruction; for if "he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant where-with He was (by profession) sanctified (or consecrated) a common thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" God is therefore certainly not obliged in justice to pardon an unbeliever, remaining impenitent and unbelieving, for the sake of Christ.

Nor can the Almighty be obliged in justice to grant His converting grace to any one, who is impenitent and unbelieving. Let us remember, that in Scripture all the graces of the Christian character are ascribed to the gift of God. It is there stated repeatedly, that repentance, and faith and the renewal of the heart, and love to God, and hope, and holiness, and obedience and all the other gracious dispositions that abound in the Christian's character are the gift of God; they come from His grace; and if therefore that grace is not bestowed, the sinner remains impenitent, unbelieving, alienated from God, unholy, devoted to sin. Now God is not obliged in justice to grant that grace. How should He be? The very thought seems an extravagance. If a man will against all evidence disbelieve in Christ, why should his Maker be obliged to compel him to believe? If a man will, when he has a thousand obligations to love God, still hate his Creator, why should he be obliged to force him to love Him? If when a man is by every consideration, as a creature, as sprung from the creating power of God and preserved by His care, bound to serve Him in holy obedience every day, he will resolve to prefer his

own short-sighted and perverse will to the will of his Creator, is the Almighty bound to restrain and coerce that will? The very thought is an extravagance; and if a man will sin on, then may the Almighty in justice leave him to sin on; and if he will not believe, He may let him remain impenitent; and if he will not love, God may justly leave him to His enmity, and to all those consequences, which result from having a corrupted state of heart, and all those awful habits which flow from that corruption.

Thus is the Almighty not obliged in justice to pardon a sinner for the sake of his good conduct, nor to forgive him for the sake of Christ, nor to grant him His converting grace. And then, lastly, if the sinner has not that gift, which the Lord is not obliged in justice to give him, then does he continue impenitent, unbelieving, alienated and ungodly. God has been pleased to bind Himself by promise to bless him who believes. And the origin of this change is not the main consideration; if the change were effected by any means, if one who was unhumiliated confess his sin, if one who was unbelieving trust simply to Christ, if one who was unholy become holy in heart and in nature, if one who once lived in disobedience obey his Maker's will, then will such a sinner be accepted, because God has promised it. But alas! the sinner never turns thus. His whole heart is against that change. He is bent on fulfilling his own will; he is determined to sin on; he has no disposition to love God; he is still resolved to accomplish his own pleasure; and though the mouth of the burning pit seems opening upon him, he will not turn back to seek life in Jesus Christ.

And thus, my brethren, a sinner is therefore helpless before God. He is in the hands of the Almighty to do with him as He pleases; absolutely in the hands of a just and holy God. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." There is no conceivable obligation laid on the Creator to save any sinner; there is no conceivable power in the sinner, by which he may lay hold on the offered salvation; he has lost it

by his corruption, as the drunkard often loses the power of refraining from his vice—as the man who is tied and bound by the chain of evil habits remains helplessly their slave to the end.

Now this concerns each sinner here. Every one of you, my dear friends, who are yet ungodly, however perhaps you may be distinguished by much that is amiable in temper and honourable and upright in conduct—you are at this very moment in the hands of a holy God; and He says to you, that He may have mercy on whom He pleases, and if He pleases He may leave you to your ungodliness. All excuses are in vain; and they will not be of the slightest strength or moment, in that day when you stand before your Maker in judgment. Every plea will then be reduced to silence. You can give no good reason why He should be obliged to change your hearts if you will not change them yourselves. If you will not turn to God yourselves, there is no sort of obligation on Him to turn you. If you will not repent and believe and love and trust and serve Him, the Almighty may leave you to those corrupt inclinations, which you cherish and love.

Let me beg you, then, to remember that you are now in His hands. The Almighty may save you, if He please; He has given His dear Son to rescue sinners from eternal death; it is a provision, which is adequate to the wants of mankind; and the Almighty can, if He please, send forth His gracious Spirit to draw you to Himself; He could change your hearts now, He could change them to-morrow; He has absolute power and right to save, He has made a complete provision for salvation, and He can save in perfect harmony with all His attributes; He is a God of boundless mercy, He is a God of infinite compassion, and He may in His mercy save all. But at the same time remember, that if He save, it is in His sovereign pleasure. He is not in any way obliged to save one ungodly sinner

here; and if He should pass you by and leave you to your own habits and your own inclinations, you must be compelled at last to acknowledge that it was perfectly just; I have shown you on other occasions, that (those habits remaining) you deserve a doom which is intolerable and eternal.

And now let me ask you to consider what there is between you and the suffering of that justly merited punishment. There are no works of your own between you and death; for you have done and can do nothing to merit pardon. There is no justice between you and death; for God would be just in inflicting that sentence. There is no mercy which interposes between you and death; for God's mercy is consistent with your everlasting doom, as it is with the doom of thousands and of multitudes whom He leaves to perish. There is no promise between you and death; for He has made a promise to His believing people, but He has made no promise to the unbelieving and impenitent. There is nothing therefore between you and eternal death, but the absolute will of God. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth." There is nothing else—you can find nothing between you and eternal death—but the absolute will of God.*

And this is the will of an Almighty Being, who has full power to accomplish your destruction when He pleases. Can you resist it, my hearer? can you resist the infinite power of God? If you do not feel subject to that awful will, it is because you have dishonourable thoughts of your Maker. You can no more resist any one purpose of His, than (to use the awful imagery of Scripture) the chaff can resist the fire when it bursts upon it, or than the insect can resist the falling cliff which crushes it, or the smoke which comes from the chimney top can resist the whirlwind that scatters it. These are the images, that Scripture employs. There is absolutely *no power* in any man to resist his Maker's will. And

* The reader, who feels desirous to study further the doctrine of the moral inability and just punishment of a sinner, may be much assisted by Dr. Chalmers's "Lectures on Predestination," originally published in *The Pulpit*, and since republished in a separate form. Price 6d. Sherwood & Co.

if you sometimes flatter yourself there are numbers in your condition, numbers can have no effect in the case. The numbers, who are in rebellion against human authority, may sometimes be the means of impunity to them, because it may be impossible to punish a whole empire and because those numbers may render a government too weak to punish. But is the government of the Omnipotent too weak to punish sin? Numbers against Him are no more than the numbers of thorns and thistles that grow in the field, which are a reason for their being destroyed rather than for their being spared. How could numbers resist the minor judgments of God? When He sent a flood to deluge the whole earth, and when the overwhelming waters climbed up every height and covered every mountain, how could numbers resist Him then? Just so are sinners utterly incapable of resisting at any moment the absolute pleasure of the infinite God.

And remember that this God, in whose hands you are, is angry with you now. It is the plain language of Scripture; He is angry *now* with every one in this congregation, that is still unconverted and unregenerate. You are depending, not on the blood of Christ, but on your own works; and His language is—"As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" that curse has been pronounced upon you *now*. You are now, not depending on Christ, but on self; and those who believe not in Him (we read in St. John's Gospel) are "condemned already;" that condemnation has been pronounced upon you *now*. As you do not believe in Christ, really, savingly, therefore (as we read in the same Gospel) "the wrath of God is abiding on you" *now*. You are in the hands of an Almighty Being, and that Being is angry with you; you are under His wrath now.

And let me ask you, my hearers, what is to hinder Him from taking instant vengeance? There is one expressive image of what I believe to be the true condition of every unconverted sinner in the world. When St. Paul was on his way to come, you remember that in the wild island of Melita a viper came forth and fastened on

his hand; and he held that animal over the kindled fire, and shook it into the flame. It is the exact image of a sinner in the hand of God, whose envenomed spirit is opposed utterly to His Maker's will, and whom the Almighty holds suspended over the burning pit, to shake that man into eternal woe at any moment that He pleases. There is nothing to arrest His arm; there is nothing to save one ungodly man for a single moment. He may drop him into the burning pit, just as the apostle dropped the viper, that fixed upon his hand. And what, my dear hearer—what is to save you?

Let me beseech you not to trifle with this God. There ought not to be—there must not be—a controversy between the Creator and the creature. Do not (in the name of God I beseech you) rebel against His will any more. Do not rebel against this declaration of His will. Your heart may rise against it, sinner, because it threatens you with eternal wrath; but do not rebel against God. It is the declared truth of God; and therefore strive to come into that temper, which He commands you to cherish when He says, "Be still"—"Be still, and know that I am God." You have had dishonourable views of God; you think lightly of Him now; it is the curse and plague of our corrupted nature, to think lightly of God. But now give yourself to serious thought; "be still, and know that He is God," and do not rebel in thought against His decisions any more. Do not try to deceive Him by a false and half reformation. Do not purpose now, that you will amend your ways in part. Remember He looks through your whole being; and therefore seek an entire renovation, and nothing less. If you would not meet the vengeance of that unspeakably awful God, seek a thorough renovation of your nature. And do not, my dear hearer, whoever you may be—do not delay; because to delay is to insult the Divine majesty. 'I will not yet repent, I will not yet turn to God'—what is this but the language of the most affronting insolence towards the Almighty? And while you are pleasing yourself with the thought of a

repentance at some future time, the infinite Monarch may say, That time shall never come; the moment you destine for your future change, may be a moment when you shall find yourself where repentance will never come. Therefore do not delay another night; do not delay another moment; now, while I speak to you, lift up your heart to Him, who can save you from merited destruction.

The temper you should cultivate, my brethren, is that of the patriarch Job, who said—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Oh! would that you could see your sins in their true light! Would that you could learn how you have offended the ever-blessed God! Would that you could view sin as the holy angels do! Oh! that you could have that estimate of your guilt which God Almighty has! And then, instead of rising in heart against His decisions, you would say with Job, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." In the expressive language of the apostle James (addressed to sinners and therefore I feel I may address it to every ungodly person here)—"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble; submit yourselves therefore to God." Blessed moment, if ever it comes in your history, my unhumbled hearer! when you can submit yourself to God, justify all He does, place yourself in His hands, and say (as one said of old when he was threatened with condign punishment for His offences)—"It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." Blessed moment THAT, when at last the heart is humbled, and a man feels that he consents to all the dispensations of the All-wise! "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth him God."

And is this, my dear hearer, to yield yourself up to ruin? Is it to be hopelessly accursed? Oh! God is a God of so much compassion. Who ever submitted thus to Him, justified all His doings, acknowledged that He might righteously destroy him, and did not find mercy?

I would beseech you once again, never to

think of offering to the Lord as the least atonement any of those miserable doings, with which possibly you may have been pleased, and with which you have flattered yourselves in days past; but give up the proud and offensive idea for ever. "If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy governor; will He be pleased with thee or accept thy person? saith the Lord of Hosts." You can offer nothing to the Lord, but what is "the blind and the lame"—nothing which is not an offence to Him. Forego the proud and presumptuous thought; and let your only thought, while you have thought to cherish, be fixed on Christ. It is the one, it is the last exhortation I would give to you on this occasion; oh! that you may be enabled, foregoing every other hope, to look simply to Christ. On many occasions have those, who have been reduced to a sense of utter helplessness, who have felt that they could not even take one step towards their salvation, come to this determination—If I perish, I will perish looking to Christ. Oh! that you would form such a resolution this night. Was there any Israelite, that died while his sickly eye was fixed upon the brazen serpent? Was there ever a sinner trampled to destruction yet by the wrath of God, when his dying eye looked up to the cross of Jesus? Oh! brethren, try to do this. His own direction is that you should "labour" for this eternal benefit; and "this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And therefore strive from this night to look to Christ. And if you cannot trust Him try to trust Him. And if still it seems impossible to rest wholly on Him, persevere in the effort. And if every thing else seems to fail, wait still on the Lord for that grace, by which you may be enabled thus to trust in Christ. Never allow yourself to despair. In the very time when you give up all hope in self, and are reduced to absolute *self* despair, and justify all the decisions that the Almighty may take respecting you, and own that He may justly pass you by and acknowledge His mercy and His

wisdom still, in that very moment look to Him for the exercise of that mercy which He "delighteth" to exercise.

It is the language of His own blessed Word, that "He delighteth in mercy." And may He, by His blessed Spirit, so

teach this consolatory truth to every sinner here, that while he foregoes every other hope he may find this better and blessed hope introduced in the place of those he has lost, and may cling to Christ Jesus for his eternal welfare.

SERMON XV.

THE UNCONVERTED IN FEARFUL PERIL THROUGH PRESENT DELAY.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 20, 1839.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—Heb. iii. 13.

It is not very long, my dear brethren, before you and I must stand at the judgment-seat of Christ; and amongst other things for which we must give an account, *you* must give an account of every address you have heard from this place, and I of every opportunity I have had of setting before you the truths of the Gospel. I have therefore been endeavouring to bring before you some of the most powerful considerations, in order that persons who have been living in carelessness may be induced (I had almost said, *compelled*) to seek an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. I have shown you the guilt there is in sin, and the punishment with which God has threatened it. I have shown you the extreme uncertainty of time allotted to us in this world, and the perfect right God has to destroy every unconverted person at any moment. But there are two further dangers to which you are exposed (those among us, I mean, who have not as yet received Christ, though they may have been influenced in some degree by the consideration of these solemn truths); there are two more dangers to which you are exposed, and against which I desire, with the help of God, seriously to warn you. The first arises from an unconverted person supposing that at some future time he shall feel more disposed to religion, and under more favourable circumstances for conversion to God; and the second is a disposition to mistake the false appearance of religion for religion itself. Either of these dangers may involve some in this congregation in eternal ruin. I desire to place before you both; that if you are eternally ruined from either of these causes, it may only be through your own choice, because

you would not be persuaded of the dangers to which you were exposed. The second I mean to bring before you this evening; at present let us examine what is the statement of the text on the first of these dangers.

An unconverted person may sometimes imagine (I fear it is a very common mistake), that a time will come, when he will be more inclined to religion than he is now—that at last he will be a child of God, though he is persuaded he is not so as yet. Now this is so far from a reasonable expectation, that all experience and all knowledge of our state by nature go to prove it to be false; and instead of its being just and true, a person who knows his danger and yet neglects to seek salvation at once, is in the utmost danger of finding his heart grow harder.

Of this the apostle tells us in these words—"Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Professing Christians are warned in the context lest they fail as the Israelites failed to obtain the blessings set before them; they are therefore urged to "exhort one another daily," lest they should fail in obtaining those blessings. "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "Let us labour, therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." We may observe here, that the apostle tells us to what we are to exhort one another; let us labour therefore to enter into that rest—let us take heed that we do not lose those blessings. We are shown by the example

of the Israelites what danger there is of losing them, and are exhorted therefore to labour to secure that eternal rest promised to the people of God. They were to exhort one another "daily;" that is constantly, one day after another, while time allowed and God granted them the opportunity of mutual exhortation; and thus to strengthen themselves. And the reason the apostle gives why professing Christians should thus exhort one another, is "Lest any of you should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." By these words the apostle shows it probable, that persons who do not labour, and labour at once, to enter into the rest promised to the people of God, will through that obduracy fail of obtaining it. And this is the truth I desire to set before you to day—that if any here are hoping that some better time than the present will come, when they may turn to God they may be persuaded that they are cherishing a fatal delusion.

Many persons there are—(some I have met with) who think that the present time is not that in which they can turn to God; they are so occupied with worldly cares, so harassed with a multitude of employments, they feel so little disposition for a religious life, some trouble absorbs them or some enjoyment engages their hearts and they have not any disposition heartily to turn to God *now*. They are persuaded that they must become religious some time, that their hearts must some time be changed, that they must some time become the real disciples of Christ or they will be undone; but it cannot be *now*. In the evening of life they think the world will have less influence over them, that their minds will be less set upon its pleasures; they think that as they approach the grave they will grow less worldly; and so they promise themselves that in the evening of life they will become religious, though they are now so entangled with the world, though now their habits are so directly in opposition to religion, that they cannot turn to God. Now in opposition to all these hopes, I must assure you, the great probability is that any one who is not a

Christian now—who knows the way, and knows that he must enter it, and yet does not enter at once—never will. So favourable a time as the present will never arrive; the better time they expect, will never come.

The slightest examination of facts—our experience—proves that the better time never comes. Not that the Almighty cannot at any time change the heart; but He generally uses suitable means, by which the sinner is brought to God. Undoubtedly, persons are sometimes brought to God in the evening of their days; but let us remember how many fail. If we examine how the fact is in the generality of such cases, I am persuaded we shall find that those who live on through many years, hoping that a better time will come when they may turn to God, hardly ever realise their hopes. Undoubtedly some are converted to God late in life, whose whole course has been one of ungodliness; but I apprehend it is almost always the case, that these persons have not previously known the Gospel. Those who calculate that at some future time they shall turn to God, and neglect to turn to Him now, hardly ever realise their expectation; a long-continued course of sin only tends to harden the heart and if they will not turn to God now, there is no rational ground of hope that they will have power to turn to God hereafter.

In the first place, the truths of the Gospel become familiar to persons, when they have long been accustomed to hear them, and have less influence over them than at first. Every one knows that this is the peculiar constitution of our nature, that truths which have once acted strongly on our minds, if neglected, lose their influence. There is a fatal facility in the mind to become familiar with any often repeated truth. Every one who has watched the workings of his own mind must know, that truths which have powerfully affected him at one time do not affect him now. And why should any one expect that the truths of religion will have more power over his heart at some future time than now? Since they have already lost their influence in

part, why should they not lose it altogether? We see instances continually, of those who have once trembled at the terrors of the law, and felt the attraction of a glorious Gospel hope, and who feel their hearts callous now. Sin also, constantly indulged in appears less sinful to the persons who indulge in it; and a man whose conscience is sorely wounded at one time at the commission of a sin, when he commits it again feels but little compunction, and at last comes to glory in those sins, against which he once revolted even in imagination. Wretched felons, who have disgraced themselves with the foulest crimes, have gone with a smiling countenance amidst the execrations of the multitude to the execution of their sentence; in proportion as they have given way to sin, they have lost the apprehension of its guilt, and at last it has become so familiar to them, that they have not been able to see its vileness. This is the reason that persons can hear of a coming judgment and feel no shame; it is a matter so common, that they lose sight of the atrocity of their conduct in the sight of a heart-searching God. Every one who knows any thing of the law of our nature, knows that if a person has been once well acquainted with the Gospel, and yet the habits of his mind have been constantly opposed to the will of his Maker, instead of looking at the amount of his guilt and fearing the consequences, he learns to palliate it more and more, and at last doubts whether he ought to be punished at all.

It is extremely probable too, that persons who continue to resist God, will become at length hardened in sin, because sin becomes more and more necessary to persons in proportion to their indulgence in it. The chain which winds round the captive soul of the sinner becomes stronger and stronger. If a person of choice indulge in any evil habits, they will soon tyrannise over his mind; and the longer they are indulged, the more difficult it will be to break them off. Hence if any among you, my brethren, should shrink from turning to God with all your hearts, if any of you are indulging in evil habits and shrinking from breaking them

off now, in the hope that it may be easier at a future time, you will find that they will become wrought into your very being.

They will become the habits of your nature; you will find yourselves "tied and bound with the chain of your sins." And if even now, you, especially the young, do not resist them—if you do not now receive the truths of the Gospel and heartily turn to God—instead of being more capable at some future time of giving up your whole being to love and serve God, you will find yourselves incapable of loving Him; love of the world will have more and more dominion over you, till you find yourselves absolutely helpless, and incapable of gaining any ascendancy over your evil habits. Thus it is very probable that the heart may become hardened, the die of sin become deeper. Temptations multiply with indulgence; and in proportion as a person gives himself up to a life of ungodliness, he is often induced to forsake the society of those who warn him of his danger and urge him to duty, and to seek the society of others who encourage him in sin, and thus he shuts himself out from the most powerful means to induce him to turn to God. Meantime every habit of iniquity is strengthened, every scene of temptation leads him on further from God, and the opposition to sin diminishes. And as this happens partly in the natural course of events in hearts that are turned away from God, so there is besides judicial hardening. Hosea pronounces this sentence on the Israelites when they had so loved idolatry that they would not serve God alone—"Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone:" because he chose the worship of false gods, God would leave him to it. "Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin." Because they chose the worship of false gods, temptations to the worship of false gods would multiply. And this we know did take place in the ten tribes, till they were swept away; every judgment sent from God to lead them to fear Him, made them erect fresh heathen altars, and any mercy He sent them they ascribed to their idols, to the worship of

which they only cling the closer. All the denunciations of His wrath only made them shrink the more from that awful Being whom as Joshua said—"Ye cannot serve." And by a later prophet, long after, this conduct is thus complained of on the part of the Almighty, when the people were involved in trouble; "Where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise, if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble; for according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah!" This nation multiplied its idols year after year, till they were as many in number as their cities. And thus it is, that if a person gives himself up to a course of ungodliness, occasions of ungodliness will multiply. This was the case with the traitor Judas. The Lord Jesus knew the disposition of his mind and yet permitted him to hold an office, by which constant opportunities were afforded him for indulging it; he chose to sin, and therefore the opportunities to sin increased too. And I am persuaded, that each one who has not turned to God does find, that as his transgressions multiply, temptations to sin under which he labours multiply too; and he will find his heart become harder and harder by multiplied transgressions, till sin will become the habit of his whole life, and it is far less likely he will ever be able to turn to God.

Let me add to this, that our very nature is such, that as we advance in life we become less susceptible of any new impression. Impressions we have received in earliest childhood may be easily recalled; but new impressions it is hard to retain. So that those most easily are turned to religion, whose understandings have early been impressed with the doctrines of the Gospel, while their hearts are yet tender and their habits less formed; and then when suitable means are employed, the greatest amount of good may be expected to result.

And then, in the last place, let me remind you, that if any thing can be more offensive than another to our Maker, it is deliberately to neglect this great salvation. A person may disguise his feelings from his own mind; still, if that person,

when often exhorted to it, deliberately puts off turning to God, he is in that state of mind in which he could say—"I love the ways of sin too well to leave them, though I know I must become a servant of God if I am not to be ruined; I do not love God, though I know I must supremely love Him if ever I enter the eternal world; I know I must believe in Christ, and yet my heart is so set against my Maker, that I have not resolution to do it now; the pleasures of sin I must pursue a little longer; my own will I must follow a little longer." And if this is the real disposition of any one who for a single day neglects this great salvation—if this is what He reads who interprets the unuttered dispositions of our minds—I ask you whether the judgment the Almighty pronounced on the Jews, is not just and meet to be pronounced on him, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone?" And why, my dear brethren, should not He say so of those, who set up idols in their hearts and fall down and worship them instead of Him? If it is not the gross idolatry of early days, yet in His sight such stubbornness of heart is equal idolatry; and if He said to those who worshipped idols, "Let them alone," why should He not say the same to those who set up the world in their hearts? Why, if a man refuses to give up his heart to do His pleasure, should He not say of him, "Let him alone?" Of those unbelieving Jews we know the Almighty did say, that a judicial sentence of hardness should be pronounced upon them; because the evangelist St. John assures us of it—"But though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him: that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." These Jews preferred the lusts and pleasures of the world to the service of God; they were

so worldly, that they could not love the strict law of the Saviour; they had no heart for the holiness of Jesus Christ; and because they deliberately chose to seek the world rather than the favour of God, He hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes. Now who can say, if there be any in this congregation who are now indulging in such feelings, how soon the decree of the Almighty's anger may be pronounced on him? Christ by His death has procured a pardon for all who believe in Him; and if a person under such favourable circumstances prefers to indulge in the pleasures of the world, and will not turn to God, though he knows he ought to do so, I ask such a person, what reason he has to suppose, that the Almighty will not inflict on him a sentence of judicial hardness.

Everything therefore serves to convince us, that all those are but desperate and delusive hopes in which persons indulge, who do not now turn to God, because they think they shall have more disposition to turn to Him at some future period of life. Let me remind you (and beg you to weigh well the consideration) that your own eternal welfare depends on the use you make of *the present time*. So long as a person remains unconverted, every day sin loses to his view some of its criminality and odiousness; the mind becomes so accustomed to ungodliness, that every day his nature is less susceptible; and he who deliberately displeases his Maker, may expect that the sentence of judicial obduracy will be pronounced upon him. And I am persuaded, that those among you who have not turned to God, and are convinced that it is necessary that they should, must see that the point I have endeavoured to impress upon you is true and a reality.

My brethren, some amongst you may appear very religious, may adopt all the external habits of religion, keeping the Sabbath day, reading a portion of Scripture daily, in the constant habit of secret prayer, and yet if they examine their own hearts they must know they have never turned to God. Now let me beseech you, at once to seek to separate from an evil world; seek to break

loose from your evil habits. seek that grace may take full possession of your hearts, and your whole course, till you pass triumphantly into eternity, may yet be one of unreserved obedience to your Maker. If you do so seek, that the idols of your hearts may be dethroned and the Almighty reign alone, however hard it may be to give up your worldly pleasures all at once, your worldly friendships and your worldly companions, however hard to forego these idols, yet remember the Almighty has said of His own people, "Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols?" God can dethrone them, though you cannot. He can show you the insignificance of all worldly pleasures in comparison with His love and favour. He can own you as His children, and you will be safe under His care while leading a dutiful course on earth, and He can give you the hope of a place in heaven. But if you would have the world dethroned from your affections, you must set before your minds higher objects. You must let your minds dwell on the revelation God has made in this blessed Book of the eternal world; you must think what heaven is and what hell is; you must read what is revealed in His Word of the work of Jesus Christ, of the glory of His sufferings and the necessity for them, of the blessings He secures to those who believe in Him, and the work of the Holy Spirit; you must charge it on your hearts, to think of the years you have spent (notwithstanding all the aids His infinite mercy has afforded you) without the blessings of His children: you must think how happy it would make you were you now turned to God—if you could forego all inferior objects, and have your mind filled with the worthiest of all, and that which is alone capable of filling the heart.

But if, notwithstanding all, your heart is still hard, it may be that it has already experienced what is spoken of in the text—that it is no future thing, but that it is done already—and what the apostle has written and what you have read for ten or twenty years has been experienced by you; you have become "hardened through the deceit-

fulness of sin." Sin has hardened you, and you no longer are what you once were. The tenderness of your conscience is gone. You could feel once the terrors of the law, and be animated by the glorious hopes the Gospel sets before us; but you can feel them no more. You are not affected as once you were by the threatenings or the promises of God's Word. Your heart has grown callous, that it cannot feel the curse which threatens you with final obduracy and despair. Yet if there are any here, who know that they have lost all feeling, whose hearts have grown hard in the ways of ungodliness, let all, even *you*, my dear brethren, remember, that though conversion in such a case is not common, it is not impossible—that though no ordinary power can effect it, Almighty power can—and that the Almighty has said to such as you, "From all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you, a new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh." From the very first our hearts are hardened against God; but the same power that has subdued all the stony hearts that have ever been subdued, can subdue yours. Believe it, my brethren, and instead of sinking down into hopeless despondency, and thinking that because you have been so long living in sin you must go on and bear the consequences, remember there is such an Almighty power in God as can effect the entire change of heart you want. Still can the heart of stone be broken; although nothing I could say should affect your feelings in the least, though all the threatenings of the law and the hopes of the Gospel fail to excite one emotion, and trouble and joy fail to excite it, yet the heart of stone may be broken by the eternal God. Seek then, by prayer, that you, even you, may be made signal monuments of redeeming love and power.

And lastly, my Christian friends, I would impress upon your hearts the duty the passage sets before *you*; for it may be scarcely less useful to the children of God than to others even, if only it impresses you with a feeling for the unhappy condition of those who are not in Christ. Let me then beg you to attend to the command of the apostle, "But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Are we half awake to our position with regard to our fellow men, and theirs with regard to us? Do we feel that we are doing what we can for our ungodly friends and relations, our children and servants, to save them? Are we showing, as Christians, anxiety on their behalf? When their hearts are open, are we seizing the opportunity to speak to them on the things that make for their peace? Under the influence of prayer are we seeking earnestly to lead them to God? Are we careful that the influence of our daily conduct should be that which would lead them to happiness? Let me beseech you to think of the careless and ungodly, because you have a clearer knowledge of the terrors of the day that is coming on the impenitent sinner; you have more light than they have, and you ought to compassionate them, and to do all you can to lead those who are ungodly to love and serve the Saviour. How would the Lord bless unspeakably a charity like this! And let the careless and ungodly put away, if they can, that natural shyness in speaking on religious subjects. They need not speak of their own feelings—(this is often better avoided)—but they may speak with those they love, of those great truths which are interesting to all alike; of the majesty, the glory, the holiness, the love and mercy of God as revealed in His Word—and of their great duties and obligations, and above all of the immediate and deep necessity there is, that to-day they "hear His voice and harden not their hearts."

SERMON XVI.

THE UNCONVERTED IN DANGER OF MISTAKING NATURAL EMOTIONS FOR TRUE RELIGION.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCT. 20, 1839.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom; and five of them were wise and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them."—Matthew xxv. 1—3.

THERE may be some in this congregation, who are convinced of the necessity of being religious, and purpose at some future time that they will become so; neglecting to use the means of becoming so now. I endeavoured this morning to show to such how very unlikely it is that such a purpose should ever be realised, because the heart naturally grows harder, and if they are indisposed towards religion now, it is very probable that at any future moment of their lives they will become more so.

There may be another class in this congregation, who remain in an unconverted state, not because they purpose at some future time to be religious, but because they think they are so now. They imagine that they have attained to true religion, while in fact they have never experienced its power. They may "have a name to live," but they are dead. And consequently, deceiving themselves, they may be involved as completely in ruin, as those who have never paid any attention to religion at all.

Such a class certainly exists among professing Christians; and the text, which I have chosen for our examination this evening, most strikingly brings this class before our notice.

Our Lord speaks of "ten virgins," who "went forth," according to the Eastern custom, to accompany the bridegroom in a triumphal procession to the house of the bride. Five of them He speaks of as having taken their lighted lamps for that purpose, and having with them oil, so that the light might be continued. It lasted till the bridegroom came. They did him the honour which they intended; they were owned

as his friends; they were admitted with him to the bridal festivity; and therefore, having accomplished all that they intended, they are here termed "wise." Five of them, on the contrary, took their burning lamps with the intention to do the same honour to the bridegroom, but having no oil, before he came their lamps were extinguished. They did him no honour; they were not admitted into the festivity; they were shut out from the anticipated enjoyment; they wasted all their labour; and therefore they are here termed "foolish." By these two classes, our Lord describes two corresponding classes among his professed disciples. The one make a profession of religion, which has its foundation in Divine grace. All *profess* to be preparing to meet the Lord; these are preparing *indeed*. Their profession of religion lasts. When He calls them into His own presence, when He "comes" at death by summoning them into the eternal state, they are found ready; their lamps are still burning; they are admitted to the anticipated joy; and these are therefore "wise." But there is another class, described by the five "foolish" virgins, who also make a profession of religion, not at once to be distinguished from the former, but it has not its foundation in Divine grace, and it does not last. When the Lord calls them into His presence, they are not ready to meet Him; they are excluded from His glory; and therefore, having wasted all their religious labours, they are here termed "foolish."

The passage which I have read to you, brings the condition of this second class strikingly before us: and it calls us to con-

sider these four points with respect to that class. First, that an unconverted person may make a false profession of religion, as these "foolish virgins" took their burning lamps to do honour to the bridegroom. Secondly, that an unconverted person, making a false profession of religion, may suppose it to be genuine religion—as certainly these five foolish virgins hoped that their lamps would be burning still when the bridegroom came; otherwise they would have taken pains to avoid an anticipated disappointment. Thirdly, that those who make such a vain profession are most unwise. And, fourthly, that notwithstanding the declared folly of such conduct, there is reason to fear that many are guilty of it; "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

May I entreat those, to whom this subject especially refers, to endeavour to assist me in the duty I have to discharge, by themselves seeking to be convinced of the truth? It is exceedingly difficult to convince persons of any truth against their will; but, my brethren, as your eternal interest is much involved in it—as it is of the greatest moment that you should ascertain the whole truth in this matter—endeavour now to put yourselves in such a frame of mind, as to wish heartily as before God to discover the whole truth in this matter respecting yourselves.

I. First, it is possible for a person without grace, to make a profession of religion.

By which I do not mean that a person may hypocritically pretend to feelings that he has not (which evidently is possible), and for worldly ends endeavour to seem religious, when he knows that he is not. The passage does not speak of such persons at all. These five foolish virgins were not endeavouring to impose on their companions, but had a real purpose of doing honour to the bridegroom when he came; they took their burning lamps, with the hope that those lamps would continue burning till the time of his arrival. And therefore the passage speaks of a profession of religion, which is not wholly insincere. It describes persons who have a spurious religion, which

they suppose to be real—who accomplish many religious duties, but with wrong motives—and who are thus themselves mistaken.

Now let me endeavour to show you on this occasion, to how much of religious effort and religious duty, persons, who have no grace and no genuine religion, may be prompted by various natural considerations.

In the first place, it is evident, that a person, who has no true religion and has no grace, may perceive the evidence for the truth of the Gospel. This is a matter addressed exclusively to the understanding, and a person may as well ascertain the truth of the Gospel as a revelation from God, as he may attain to a conviction of any truth in natural science. Any ungodly persons, who were present when our Lord wrought that miracle by which He fed five thousand persons with a small quantity of bread, would, if they were honest persons, although without any religion, be convinced that it was truly a miracle; and they might from thence deduce, that our Lord must be "a Teacher sent from God," while at the same time their hearts entirely opposed His mission. And this I conceive to have been really the case with respect to numbers of His bitterest enemies. So may a person now equally be convinced of the accuracy and adequacy of the evidence which we have for the truth of the Gospel; the only difference between him and them being, that they received that evidence by their senses and that he receives it by unimpeachable testimony.

In the next place, a person may evidently without grace attain in the same manner to a knowledge of the great doctrines of the Gospel. He may proceed, from ascertaining that there is a system of truth termed the Gospel, to examine what that system is; and he may find, by an examination of the Bible, exactly as he would examine any other subject, all the great truths that are plainly recorded there. He may ascertain, that man is declared there to be in a state of ruin—that for this he deserves eternal punishment—that there is no way of salvation revealed, except by faith in Christ—that

faith in Christ must work its proper fruits in repentance, in love and gratitude to the Redeemer, in holy obedience, and in various other excellent dispositions which follow. He may see it distinctly declared, that this change, by which a person who did not believe becomes a believer, is wrought by the Spirit of God, and may hence see the necessity that any one, to become a believer, be a partaker of the grace of God. All this is also a matter addressed exclusively to the understanding; and he has only to exercise common attention and common sense, to ascertain all these great truths. It is not to be doubted, that under favourable circumstances, numbers who have never any sense of religion at all are thus persuaded.

In the third place, a person may, without grace, no less obviously, perceive that these truths are very solemn. If there be an eternal punishment awaiting the unpardoned sinner, it is an awful truth. If there be a glorious heaven awaiting these who are believers in Christ, it is an animating truth. If it be needful, in order to escape eternal hell or enjoy an eternal heaven, that a person be a partaker of the grace of God, through which he may be a real believer in Christ, this is a solemn truth. A person may (still in the exercise of his ordinary understanding) perceive something of their greatness. He may compare eternity with time, just as he may compare the interests of ten years with the interests of a day; and he may thus be led to see, that it is of immense moment to any one, that he become a religious man.

In the next place, it is equally plain, that a person without grace may, while he considers the greatness of these truths, be led earnestly to wish that he may escape from eternal punishment. The evidence may be so cogent that eternal punishment does await a sinner, and he may be so conscious that he is a sinner, and he may feel a strong desire (if possible) to escape that ruin which threatens him. He may therefore be very earnest on this subject. He may greatly desire that he may be a child of God, a disciple of Christ—that he may have an eternity of blessedness beyond the grave. And all

this without the slightest principle of true religion—from exactly the same motives, which lead a convicted criminal to wish to escape from the punishment due to him, or as a son who is threatened for his misconduct wishes to improve that he may escape from the punishment threatened. There is no more real religion in wishing to be happy beyond the grave, than there is in a son wishing to escape from the threatened disinheritance; there is no more real religion in wishing to be happy beyond the grave, than there is in a felon wishing to escape the sentence of the law. It is the natural desire of being happy, on the one hand, or of escaping misery, on the other. By the force of all these truths, he may, without the least grace, be led to deep conviction of sin—to an overwhelming remorse of conscience; just such as oppressed the heart of Judas, when he found that through his instrumentality the Lord was condemned to die. And together with this overwhelming conviction, he may “almost be persuaded” that he will become a Christian; just as king Agrippa, who when he saw the remarkable example set by the apostle Paul, and heard the demonstration of Divine truth from his lips, could hardly escape from the impression thus wrought upon his mind, and said, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” He may tremble under these awful truths, just as Felix trembled; and may desire in his heart that he may be saved from those threatenings, to the full force of which he feels himself exposed.

And when a person has attained thus much, it is equally plain, that without any grace he may be led to do many things which seem to have a religious character, and to make many efforts corresponding to those vehement emotions which have lodged within his heart. If he is thus convinced of sin, if he is tortured by remorse, if he is “almost persuaded” like Agrippa to be a Christian, then under the influence of that excitement it is plain that he must be led to take some steps towards the attainment of that, which he so much desires. He may therefore humble himself for the sin he knows he has been guilty of: he may

“humble himself before God,” like Ahab. Or he may sometimes feel the greatest regret, which may make him shed floods of tears, on account of the folly of which he has been guilty in sinning against God; he may be led to say, like king Saul, “I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly”—and accompany this with many tears of apparent contrition. Or he may perhaps be led, further, to make a profession of religion—as Simon Magus did, and was baptized in company with many real believers; so may he come to the table of the Lord to seal his profession, and seem (like Simon Magus) a genuine disciple. He may be led, after having made such a profession, to be exceedingly strict in all the decorum of religion, and exceedingly diligent in attendance upon all the means of grace; just as was the apostle Paul before his conversion, who could say that he “profited in the Jews’ religion above many of his equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly jealous of the traditions of his fathers,” and that “touching the righteousness which was in the ceremonial law he was blameless;” no one could accuse him of neglecting any of the external decencies and rules of religion. He may in all this be exceedingly earnest about his salvation, and be very amiable and most exemplary in his deportment, like that young ruler who came to our Saviour, saying, “Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”—who (while others despised Christ) bowed down at His feet, and when our Saviour enumerated the great moral commandments could truly say (in a sense and to a degree could say sincerely and honestly) “All these have I kept from my youth up;” a youth so amiable that “Jesus beholding him loved him,” and of whom it is not to be doubted that all around had as high an opinion of him, and thought him a most exemplary model of religion. Or he may perhaps be led even further. He may become a peculiar friend of the most devoted Christians; just as Abithophel was the bosom friend and counsellor of David. Perhaps he may be led to make great sacrifices for the cause of religion, and join himself

under many discouragements to those who are most distinguished for piety; as Ananias and Sapphira were thus united to the church at its best and holiest period. Or perhaps he may be of much service to the cause of God, may speak much in defence of the truth, be thought to be an eminent servant of Christ, rank high in the church of God—as Judas who was called to be an apostle.

All this a man may do, without the slightest grace; as will be evident to any one, who will for a moment consider.

He may do it without grace, because all these whom I have mentioned had the same experience while they continued the enemies of God. Ahab continued the enemy of God, though he so “humbled himself;” and he perished miserably in his sins. King Saul, though he wept for his folly and acknowledged it most bitterly, still became more and more criminal in his temper and conduct, and was cut off for his sins. Simon Magus, at the time when he made that profession of religion, was “in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” When Saul of Tarsus was so rigid and exact in all the duties of religion, he was a blaspheming persecutor, and so filled with malice against the truth, that when he afterwards was brought to his senses by the grace of God, he looked upon himself (for that part of his life) as the very “chief” of sinners. Others, who made similar professions, have still been found destitute of all grace. Agrippa, though half “persuaded to be a Christian,” lived and died a wicked man. Felix, though he trembled under the sound of the Gospel, continued still the bond-slave of iniquity. And I need not say, that Ananias, however great the profession of religion made by him, and although he could even make large sacrifices for the cause of God, was still cut off with a lie in his mouth—still impenitent, lying against the Holy Ghost. And the wretched Judas, though he seemed to be placed amongst the eminent disciples of Jesus Christ, was throughout the whole of that period a “son of perdition,” an enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ, and died by his

own hand. Now whatever these persons experienced without grace, any one may experience now without grace; and all that we see in their history may be transferred to the history of any individual now, and yet that person be altogether destitute of godliness.

And when we look a little further into this matter, we see it is too plain that it may be so. For what is genuine religion? It is to love God; it is to obey God; it is to believe, to trust simply, the Redeemer; it is to obtain spirituality of mind; it is to repent heartily of sin. But all this that I have described is compatible with the entire absence of all those holy dispositions. All this that I have described may spring exclusively from self-love—may come entirely from the natural fear of wrath or the natural desire of happiness. Not (observe) the desire of holiness, not the desire of being happy in the love of God, not the desire of being conformed to Christ, and finding the pure happiness after which the renewed soul aspires; but the desire of having such a happiness as man enjoys now in the midst of his possessions, a happiness which is compatible with entire enmity to God, a happiness which is consistent with an absolute earthliness of mind. All that I have described may spring from such a temper; and it has no more godliness in it, than the conduct which we see in men in general, anxious to escape from present sorrow or to secure present enjoyment. True religion springs from Divine grace, tends to the glory of God, makes the nature holy, and leads back the revolted soul to love his Creator as he ought; but in all *this*, there is nothing of Divine grace. Nature is evidently capable of accomplishing it all. In all this, there is no love to the Divine Being; but it is absolutely compatible with enmity.

And therefore all this profession may be entirely vain, and the person who makes it as far from God and Christ, as Ananias or as Judas was.

II. And yet, at the same time, a person who makes this vain profession may be persuaded that it is genuine religion.

I cannot doubt that our Lord intended to describe that state of mind in the parable before us. If these foolish virgins had not been persuaded that their lamps would burn on till the bridegroom came and that they should accomplish their object, they would doubtless have been led previously to make other preparations. But they thought that they were secure of that enjoyment, and that though they had not taken oil with them to replenish their lamps, still (not less than the others) they should share in the promised festivity. Whence I infer, that our Lord meant to teach us, that persons making this false profession of religion would still be persuaded that it was genuine.

Others plainly may be mistaken with respect to it. The wise virgins would not discover that the foolish had no oil with them; they would see their lamps burning like their own, and would suppose that they were as well prepared to wait and welcome the bridegroom when he came. And this profession of religion, though wholly vain, has in it so much which resembles true religion, that numbers of Christians may believe that those who make it are numbered amongst the people of God. St. John teaches us this truth, when he tells us, of some who were apostates in his day—"They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us they would no doubt have continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." They never were true believers, when their profession was the fairest; but yet the falsity of that profession could not be well distinguished, few could detect it, and it was only by apostacy that it was ascertained to be false. It is therefore very possible, for those who make a profession like this, to deceive (unintentionally to deceive) those with whom they act, and to be thought to be real Christians, when the Lord, who "looks upon the heart," may say as He did to some of old (also thought to be eminent in godliness), "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you."

And so may they *themselves* also be persuaded that their religion is genuine. There are many things to deceive them.

In the first place, all such persons wish to be deceived; and we know what a powerful influence that has, in blinding our minds upon any matter. They wish to be deceived. They have seen enough of religion to know that they must be religious; they wish therefore to secure an escape from the punishment threatened to sin; but yet, their hearts being unchanged, they wish too to preserve their habits of ungodliness. And therefore they would have a religion compatible with both objects; which should (if possible) secure their happiness hereafter, and yet not interrupt their happiness here. They wish to be persuaded that they have such a religion; and when they have made all these sacrifices, and attained to such feelings, they naturally think that they are religious.

We must observe too, that not having experienced Divine grace they only know it by the imagination, or by the observation of its effects in others; and in the external conduct of real believers, there is not so much of difference from their own, as to enable them readily and easily to detect the falsehood of their profession. They do not know by experience what faith is, or else they would see at once that they have none; they do not know by experience what love to God is, or they would know at once that they have none; but thinking of these things only speculatively, as things of which the Scripture speaks and as things of which Christians speak, they may the more easily persuade themselves that they have faith and that they have love, when indeed they are destitute of both.

And then there is such a close resemblance—at least to a certain extent and in certain matters there is such a close resemblance—between this religion to which unconverted nature may attain, and the true religion which grace imparts, that it may easily deceive them. To mention only a few of those particulars—Such persons may remember that they have had strong religious emotions, that they have felt keenly some sermon they heard, or been deeply impressed by some book they read, or by some conversation with a Christian friend. They may remember the time when they

shed many tears on account of their sins, and knelt down in secret before God, and seemed to make earnest prayer to Him that they might escape from His wrath. They may remember, that they have been led to make great changes in their external habits, and to be very earnest about the salvation of their souls, and to outstrip many whom they deem possessed of real godliness. Why, if they are so superior to many others around them—why should they doubt that they are religious? They are ready to say, with that young ruler, “What lack I yet?” With all these deep convictions, with so many prayers, with such a firm belief of the truth of the Gospel and such a full acknowledgment of submission to the Gospel, joining with God’s people and attending upon all the ordinances of grace—“what lack I yet? what lack I yet?” Alas! *everything* that constitutes true religion. In all this, there is nothing like repentance, there is nothing like hatred of sin, there is no genuine trust in the Redeemer. Such persons never cast themselves as ruined sinners on the mercy of Christ. Such persons never heartily committed to Him their whole welfare, and placed themselves unreservedly in His hands to save and to govern them. Such persons never came to a fixed resolution to serve God, never felt His law to be in their hearts, never loved His service heartily, never felt real gratitude to Him. Their hearts have been altogether *nothing* things from the first moment that they were impressed with religious subjects, and continue so still. And therefore they “lack” *everything*. And yet at the same time it is plain, that all this external religion, all these natural feelings, this play of the imagination, this impression which solemn truths make on the unregenerate heart, may seem to them very like real godliness.

I may add, that such persons must be flattered by observing, that they are thought religious by so many others; which tends still further to deceive them. Their worldly companions and friends think them already too religious, and assert that they have gone further in religion than common sense warrants. Their Christian friends

may believe (as they heartily wish) that they may be the servants of God. Their ministers may think that they are truly pious. Their bosom friends may perhaps have no suspicion to the contrary. And if flattered by so many to an opinion which they wish to cherish, it is too natural that they should be deceived.

And thus, my brethren, you see, that while the whole profession is vain, because it is destitute of real godliness, has not its foundation in grace at all, still may those who make it be convinced that they are the children of God and the heirs of heaven.

III. Yet, in the third place, their conduct must be pronounced unwise. "Five of them were foolish."

It is unwise, because that deception is not necessary—because they might ascertain the truth, if they would. Just as those foolish virgins might have anticipated that their lamps would go out before the bridegroom came, and might have provided themselves with oil to be secure against such a probable incident, just so those who make a vain profession of religion ought to discover that it is vain. As it has not in fact anything of real godliness in it, they might if they would discover it. They might perceive and know, that in all this they had never attained to hatred of sin; they might know, if they considered, that they have not. They might ascertain that they never had prevailing love to God. They never loved His service; they might know it. They never had their hearts set upon spiritual and heavenly objects; they might ascertain it. If they are so deceived, though the deception is most facile, yet still they might have escaped from it and would not. They were deceived, because they chose to be deceived; and that deception was therefore folly.

It is folly, because it is so transient and must prove so fatal. It has not even the poor excuse of furnishing them with rich enjoyment for many centuries. A few years—a few months, it may be—is all, during which it affords them a precarious satisfaction. And it is as fatal, as it is mo-

mentary. It hinders them from ever seeking and finding the grace of God; it hinders them from ever becoming really pious because they are content with the semblance of piety.

It is foolish, because they thus wilfully cast away the greatest blessings, of which nature is capable—secure perhaps a poor enjoyment for a few years and cast away eternal happiness.

It is always folly, folly under all conceivable circumstances, for a man to remain destitute of true religion; but if any class are pre-eminently unwise, it is those who acknowledge the truth of the Gospel, who have ascertained its doctrines, who have felt something of their force, who have been under "the powers of the world to come," who have desired to be Christians, and yet remain without partaking of the grace of God—those who with all these feelings throw them all away, are satisfied with a religion they might ascertain to be false, and will never earnestly set themselves to seek and to attain the converting grace of God.

"Five of them were foolish." And while perhaps now a man may applaud himself as wise, and may think that he secures both worlds, he is losing both. For while in the eternal world this vain profession will be unmasked and seen to be vain as it really is, on the other hand even now he sacrifices far better blessings than those that he secures. He may remain worldly for a little while, he may have some of the enjoyment that this earth provides for those whose hearts are set upon it, but he might have richer and better blessings if his heart were given to God. If he were a real Christian, he would feel a spring of joy opening in his bosom, of which he has no conception now. He would feel at peace with his Maker; and new principles and new affections rising in his heart would make him feel that he was living a higher life and enjoying a purer happiness, that he never knew before. And therefore, to ruin his soul for ever and to forego his true happiness now, is doubtless unwise.

IV. And yet, while there is thus undeni-

able folly in a false profession of religion, our text leads us to believe that there are many, who will be proved guilty of it.

God only knows who are His and who are not. It His is prerogative to say—“*I know you*, that ye have not the love of God in you.” But, my brethren, since it is so easy to be deceived, since there are so many inducements to the unconverted person to wish to be deceived, since the flattery of the world is so likely to mislead him, therefore there is much reason to fear that great numbers, who are brought to some profession of religion, are content with that vain profession of it.

Hence then, in conclusion, let me earnestly entreat you, as many in this congregation as have any reason to apprehend that this is their own case, to ascertain what is their true condition.

But first I must address another class for a few moments. It is very possible, that this subject, in which there is much to alarm a careless person, may be peculiarly depressing to those, who ought not to be so affected by it. While those who are deceiving themselves are often callous, real children of God, who have not yet had much experience of the power of religion, are very apt to apply to themselves what really does not belong to them, and may imagine that they are these vain professors and merely nominal disciples of Christ, when He sees them to be indeed His. Now, my dear friends, let me first suggest to you, that the very fact that you are anxious, that you are disposed to fear that you do not belong to Christ, is rather a symptom that you have found him, than that you are amongst His enemies. It is not common, for those who have no true religion to be sensitive to that apprehension, and to imagine quickly that they do not belong to Christ. But as God sees that you have genuine principles of religion, as you have them in fact if you have been led to repent of sin, to believe in Christ, to love your heavenly Father and to love His service, although this experience is at present immature and you cannot see the full evidence that it is genuine, let me beg you, my dear friends, without dwelling much

upon the amount of evidence which you possess of being the children of God, (for you will never find peace by examining that—it is too feeble)—let me beg you at once to look to that adorable Saviour, in whom (though you doubt) you are really believing. Your hearts are drawn to Him; you do love Him, you love His service; and therefore you can do what another cannot—you can look to Christ now, you can cast yourselves as helpless and unworthy upon His grace and care, you can ask Him to save you by His almighty power and love. My dear friends, look directly to the Redeemer. In the language of the apostle—be constantly “looking unto Jesus.” And while you look—while you think of His grace, His power, His love, His readiness to welcome sinners—you may not know how, but faith will imperceptibly strengthen, doubts will be imperceptibly removed, and without so much as looking once at yourselves or thinking what you are, you will have such hope in Christ, such peace in Him, as will sweep away further doubt. Look then, directly to that Redeemer; put yourselves in His hands; commit yourselves to Him to save you for ever; and He who has brought you hitherto, and given you (though you know it not) real faith and real love to Him will lead you onward till you are “filled with all joy and peace in believing.”

Oh! that those who have no faith were as susceptible to doubt and fear!—that they were as ready to believe that they are not the children of God, as many who are! Yet even to you my dear friends, I say (not without hope), Examine your state before God, and ascertain (in the name of God) your own true condition. If you are deceived in the profession of religion which you make, ascertain it at once. Remember, you need not be deceived. There is so much of difference between genuine religion and that which is spurious, that if you only examine attentively the marks of true religion laid down plainly in the Word of God, and then (solicitous to know the truth) compare your experience with those marks of genuine godliness, I am persuaded you will find that all is false

and hollow. You will find (if it is alas ! true) that you have never repented, that you have never believed, that you have never loved, that you have never cheerfully obeyed, that you have never attained to spirituality of mind, that you have no principle of genuine godliness, that you have never experienced converting grace. And however you may shrink from the discovery, make it *now*. My friends, if you make it *not*, you will be deceived to your eternal ruin. Now do not go down to destruction by cherishing delusive hope. It is foolish in any one to cast away the whole happiness of eternity. But *you* have been convinced that there is a necessity of being religious, or else you would not have made this profession ; you know more of the truth than others, or else you would not have been led to go thus far ; the present amount of seriousness to which you have attained, the religious habits which you have formed, the sacrifices you have made, show how far the Gospel has won your understanding and pierced your conscience. Do not cast away all these advantages. They have been given by the merey of God to lead you further. Do not then rest as you are ; but having ascertained that you have no real religion, now seek by the grace of God that you may have what you have never hitherto known. *Now* seek from Him that real religion, which grace bestows. Make use of all your knowledge, all your convictions and your present state of feeling, to seek from the Author and Giver of every good gift, that henceforth you may supremely love Him and that you may unfeignedly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Without this, my friends, everything you experience is vain. " Though you speak with the

tongues of men or of angels, and have not charity, you are nothing ; and though you had the gift of prophecy and could understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though you had all faith so that you could remove mountains, if you had not love to God you would be nothing ; and though you should bestow all your goods to feed the poor" but with a view of securing your salvation, and if you could " give your body to be burned" in the zealous defence of truth and to secure your salvation, still if you had not love to God all that profession would be vain. Now you have it not. You may know that you have it not. Then never rest till it is yours. It is that which I would earnestly impress upon the conscience and understanding of each person here, that has not attained to true religion ; never rest, till you supremely love God—till you love Him so as to love His service, and love His Word, and love His day, and love His people, and love not only the promises of the Gospel but all that God has revealed, and love His sovereignty, and love His wide dominion, and love the awful attributes that are as a " consuming fire" to all who are ungodly. Never rest, till you have that supreme love, which God the Spirit imparts to those that have faith in Christ. That will be **TRUE** religion. And then, instead of being numbered among the foolish virgins, who " took their lamps and took no oil with them," you will be numbered amongst the wise, who take oil also with them, whom true grace will still lead onward to the end, their lamps still brightly burning, and guide them straight to the very presence of their Saviour and their God.

SERMON XVII.

THE FUTURE HAPPINESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, SET BEFORE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 27, 1839.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore"—Psalm xvi. 11.

God in His infinite mercy has addressed us in His word by the most various motives, that we might secure that salvation provided for sinners in Christ. Sometimes He addresses our natural fear of pain and sorrow, and sometimes He addresses our natural desire after happiness; as though He would leave no part of our nature unaddressed that he might win rebellious sinners to Himself, pursuing them with a mercy which never is exhausted and a patience which can never be surpassed.

Among those motives addressed to our natural desire after happiness, is this—The blessedness of the children of God in another world. Of which we have a short but very expressive description in these words; which I will endeavour to explain, hoping that in the goodness of God, some of those here, who may never have been moved by the terrors of His law to seek an interest in Christ, may be constrained by the riches of His goodness to desire to have a part in those immense and unspeakable blessings which He has provided for His people.

The passage itself is spoken in the person of the Messiah to come; of whom and in whose name David here speaks, and, having spoken of His death and declared that He should not remain so long in the grave as to "see corruption," he then adds these words in the name of the Messiah—"Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." We learn from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that these

words referred to Christ, and that David knowingly uttered them of the Messiah to come. But the words uttered, although uttered in His person and with reference to His own ascension to glory, still contain a general truth. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore;" these words do not and cannot describe the blessedness of the Messiah only, but the blessedness of all who are placed in the circumstances mentioned. The blessedness, then, is of all who are admitted to the presence of the Lord and are at His right hand. Now as we know, that where Christ is, there His people shall be (it is a part of their future joy), so if these words describe the blessedness of our great Head, they describe no less the blessedness of His people when they are where He is. If "in the presence of the Lord there is fulness of joy," and they are admitted into His presence, then *they* have "fulness of joy." And if "at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore," and the Lord Jesus Christ will at the last place all His people "on His right hand," then there are "pleasures for evermore," reserved for *them*. The words therefore describe the future blessedness of all those, who are partakers of the salvation which Christ has obtained for believers on the cross. They tell us, that the happiness of believers hereafter will not be incomplete, but perfect; they assure us, that their joy will not be transitory, but enduring. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

May I hope—may I admit for a little while the imagination (which I trust may not prove such hereafter)—that all in this congregation, however varying in habits, opinions and wishes now, may at last, through the sovereign mercy of the best of all beings, be brought to be real believers in Jesus Christ? May I imagine for a while, that all in this congregation having been constrained by the various motives that God has set before them in His Word to seek and find salvation in the Son of His love, each here shall one day be able to say, with exulting hope—“Thou wilt show me the path of life; in Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore?”

Now were this to be realised—were all in this assembly, even the most careless and the most ungodly, constrained by the goodness of God to lay hold on this inestimable salvation—then what, my friends, would be our happiness in a few years?

I. It would, in the first place, be *complete*. You and I in a short time should be there where there is “fulness of joy”—a blessedness which is perfect and complete.

If we are Christ's, if we shall be Christ's before we leave this earth (and God in His mercy grant it to each soul present), then, my brethren, we shall be admitted into a world in which there is *no more evil*; because our joy could not be full, while evil still remained.

It is a world, in which we shall feel no moral evil. We shall never sin more. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” Into that blessed community nothing whatsoever can be admitted that defileth; but there all then are sinless. St. Peter has assured us, that when at the final conflagration of this earth all men shall stand before the Redeemer in judgment, we as Christians may “look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.” It may be a far more glorious earth than ours, which we may witness; and all that is now sublime or enchanting in the scenery of na-

ture may there be wondrously outdone. All that is now beautiful in lake or stream, in mountain cliff or cataract or glen—all that we now admire in the most enchanting bowers or wide-spread forests, in earth or heaven, of ocean or land—may there be far surpassed. But this is not the substance of the believer's hope. It is this—that under those new heavens and in that new earth there dwelleth righteousness. There all are free from sin. There are no more tormenting passions, which are the ruin of the possessor and the plague of all with whom he acts. There is no more envy, which perversely turns all the blessings of others into a curse to ourselves. There is no more of anger there, and wrath, and unnatural and needless contention. There are no more tyrannical appetites, which at once are the disgrace and the bondage of him whom they make their slave.

There will then be no more sight of evil in others, any more than the consciousness of evil in ourselves. There we shall not see any longer injustice and wrong, oppression and cruelty, contention and enmity. No more calumny and misrepresentation then; and none of those miseries, of which sin in this world is so prolific a source. For in that new heavens and new earth there dwelleth righteousness.

There too we shall be no more exposed to all the snares and assaults of the great enemy of souls. Satan, who now is so well acquainted with our weaknesses and has surveyed our history so accurately, will no longer be there to harass and assault, even if he may not destroy. For that wicked one, who now “goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,” will then be bound down by the chains of the Divine power for ever.

There too we shall no more be exposed to the wrath of our offended God; for we read in His Word, of that world of happiness, that “there shall be no more curse.” We shall not have the consciousness of unrepented sin, and the shame of sin subduing us; nor shall we have the remorse of sin that is unforgiven, the sense of a guilt that

nothing can remove, the dread of threatened punishment, the consciousness of a separation from our God, the fear of His final withdrawing. All this will be past ; for in that world of holiness, there is no more curse.

And as there is no moral evil there, so we then shall have passed all natural evil too. For we are told that "there shall be no more death" there—that "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." And therefore all that persons now suffer in the approaches of death, will be suffered no more then. Sinners now, under the just consequences of their sin, are harassed by months or even years of progressive sickness—with all the mortification of separation from their active habits, with almost unintermitting pain, with continual languor—sleepless nights and weary days appointed to them, and no prospect before them but increase of agony till nature sinks under the conflict—often wishing for death, and death will not come—and that which is thought by most men to be the greatest of enemies becoming through the intensity of their previous sufferings almost a friend. But this shall be no more. There is neither sickness nor pain nor languor in that world, to which we are hastening. Nor is there there any toil; for we read, that "there remaineth a rest to the people of God," and when admitted there, "they rest from their labours." They may now be wearied in duty—feel that they are over-tasked, sometimes by the necessities of their family or their own, sometimes by the obligations of duty, till nature is exhausted, and that which might be otherwise delightful becomes an oppressive burden. But in that world, though there is no indolence, there is no weariness. They "rest not day nor night" singing the praises of their glorious Creator and Friend, but yet they rest too, for there is no weariness there. The immortal frame is strong to glorify Him, who has glorified it; and they find a delight in all those blessed employments, to which they are admitted for ever. There too (if God shall grant us grace to reach that world of glory, we shall find) there will be no more want; for He has told

us in His Word, that those that are admitted there "hunger no more neither thirst any more." All the troubles which now even His own children pass through, often in painful destitution, in uncertainty how the wants of nature are to be supplied, in unbefriended poverty, with a bare and empty tenement and with feeble and fading help—all this will be passed then; for there (in a much more emphatic sense than here) may the believer say with David, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." There too there is no more sorrow; for Christ has promised to remove it all for ever. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." All those miseries that we see or feel on earth (the natural and fearful consequences of sin) will be then done with. We shall then see no more violent crimes, by which men rage against one another as the wild beasts. There will then be no more pauperism and penury, no more wrong and suffering. In that world sin will not inflict upon persons premature decay and wasting disease. We shall no more look aghast upon insane minds and crippled bodies. But there all will be made glorious, because sin is done away. Indeed, my brethren, if you think of all the sources of sorrow, which you have either experienced or witnessed in this world (which, after all the blessings God gives it, is yet fitly described as a valley of tears), you may remember that they shall all be passed, and have no admission into the world where His children shall dwell.

And as there is no moral evil and no natural evil, so, on the other hand, there will be *the enjoyment of all good*. "In Thy presence is fulness of joy." Their happiness is complete; whatever can administer to their joy is granted to them then.

In the first place, we are assured that then we shall be with our glorified Saviour. "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And as this is His promise, so it shall be accomplished, as the

apostle Paul has said—"He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be ever with the Lord." This is the glory and joy of His people—they will be with Him. With Him, who has been the source of all their happiness; with Him, by whose sorrow they were made to rejoice; with Him, by whose grace their natures have been renewed; with Him, who has been their Advocate when they offended; with Him, who has blessed them all their life long, who has communicated to them His Holy Spirit, who has shown towards them a patience which nothing could exhaust, a love which passed understanding; with Him, who (though they outraged and dishonoured and forgot and turned away from Him) would never turn away from them, till He planted them in His glorious kingdom. They "will be for ever with the Lord."

And there they shall see His glory. For He has promised it. "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." If we are His, my friends, in a few years we shall see the glory of the Son of God. We shall see all His external majesty. "Now we see through a glass darkly;" we can read of Him in His Word, we hear of Him in the Gospel, we meditate upon all He has said and done, and it is a mirror in which we see something of His lustre. But then we shall see "face to face;" our eyes will see the Lord Jesus Christ, who once hung on Calvary to save us. We shall see what a glorious kingdom He rules over then, and what countless worshippers attend His throne. We shall see His bliss. We shall gaze upon that countenance, which is no longer "marred more than the sons of men," but which is resplendent with Divine glory, and expresses accurately all the graces and the glories of His nature. We shall then see (what is better still) His moral glory. We shall "see Him as He

is;" and while He manifests in that wide dominion His wisdom, His bounty, His faithfulness, His kindness, His truth, and all the adorable perfections of His nature, we shall see them all richly displayed, and our hearts will triumph in our glorious Redeemer.

And this, my friends, will at last make us like Him; we shall not only see His glory, but we shall become like Him in glory. If we are His, in a few years, when we put off this frail tabernacle, we shall be made like unto our Lord. For He has promised it. "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." Some of His people on earth saw something of His glory when He shone beyond the brightness of the sun on the mount of transfiguration, and in the isle of Patmos; and He has promised us, that we shall have a glorified frame like His. This body of sin and death is now hastening to the grave; and it is like a rude and frail cabin, through which every wind drives, which the tempest penetrates, and which is soon to be taken down. But then will the glorified form, no longer liable to sickness and death, be as a glorious palace to the glorified spirit that inhabits it; for we shall be like our Lord. And (what is better) we shall be like Him then in mind as well as in form. For "now," says the apostle St. John, "we are the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be;" we do not fully know the employments and the blessedness of the eternal world. We cannot imagine that glory even which is revealed; the words fall upon our ears as promising us something of wondrous and unknown delight and glory, but what it is we know not. But the apostle says, "We know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." When we see for ever that wisdom, that goodness, that holiness, that truth, that kindness of heart—when we are surrounded as by the sunshine of heaven—then shall we contract something of the same glory

and be wise and holy and faithful and true and benevolent, even as our Lord is. What a world of blessings is involved in these promises, that God has given!

But not only shall we share in this moral glory, but He has told us we shall share in His glorious bliss. For He will say to each of us (if we are numbered amongst His people) when our hour of judgment comes—"Well done, good and faithful servant! thou has been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." And we are (as the apostle Paul has said in another place) "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." So then, He has promised us that we shall share in His glory. Imagine the bliss of Him, who being infinite in nature, infinite in goodness, reigns over the wide spread universe of God; and He says—"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"—Come and share in that glory which belongs to the Saviour. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father in His throne." He will make each one of His people to partake in that glorious bliss, which He Himself enjoys.

And must not then their bliss be great? It is said in our text to be a "fulness of joy." We must believe, my friends, that it will be. The apostles Jude and Peter speak of it as a "being glad with exceeding joy," and tell us that Christ will "present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy;" and we must believe, that whenever that hour comes when we shall be admitted into His presence, we shall find all our hopes surpassed. Let the imagination be as active as it may, let the soul in meditation on the glory and goodness of God obtain what views it may of the blessedness reserved for His people, the reality will surpass them all. "In thy presence is fulness of joy." If we shall reach the presence of our Lord, we may depend upon it there will be no wish ungratified there, and no faculty un-

employed, no affection that is not filled, no want of our nature that is not satisfied. There will be "fulness of joy." Each of us in a few years will be as happy as his soul can be—will have nothing left to desire—will not be able distinctly to conceive of a happiness greater than his own. There will be no want; there will be all joy. Blessed be God! though we seemed such hell-doomed creatures, this shall be our portion and inheritance.

II. These joys will be as *eternal*, as they are complete.

I need not recal to you the many passages of God's Word, in which the joy of heaven is pronounced to be eternal. You recollect them with gratitude and hope. You know that our nature then will be immortal; and therefore we shall never lose our joys by dying. For, as the apostle says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality." It shall be liable to no decay more; for that immortal nature shall be made strong to bear the "exceeding weight of glory," which the apostle says shall be laid upon it. Here men, when they most love life, cannot retain it; and when they most abhor the idea of dying, death pursues them. They are laid upon a bed of sickness; death comes with its "abhorred countenance," and sits by their side day by day, looks in between the curtains of their dying bed, chills all their blood, seizes upon their trembling frame, and however they may shrink or resist and whatever terror or determination they may exhibit, drags them from all their occupations and from all their joys. But there "this mortal shall have put on immortality," and death shall be never able to put his hand upon that undying body. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;" and we shall not know his abhorred grasp any more.

And as we shall not lose our joys by dying, so neither are they in their own nature liable to decay. For God has assured us in His Word, that these blessings, that inheritance destined for us if we are the children of God, is "an inheritance incor-

ruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It is "incorruptible;" so that no temptation, like that which once corrupted the joy of Eden, shall spoil it. It never "fades away;" because in its own nature it never shall be exhausted. There is nothing in it like that in the blessings of earth, which makes them such as soon weary their possessor, and (if there is nothing to take them violently from us) in their own nature leave the soul sick and disappointed; but this is calculated to satisfy the soul for ever, and shall never decay.

There is no violence to rob the believer of these joys when they are once possessed. For thus does our Saviour counsel all that hear His Gospel; "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." Here, how often the man who seemed to be delighting in the greatness of his acquisitions, the abundance and the certainty of his joys, feels that some unforeseen contingency has robbed him of them; and that, just at the moment when he seemed hastening to take from them the richest enjoyment. But there can be no violence in heaven; there is no more enemy, no tempter there, and there no thief can rob us of the joys which God has prepared for His people.

And then our Saviour is unchangeable. Therefore if it is His love that has once placed us there, surely that love shall never pass. He is "the same yesterday and to-day and for ever." The friendship of others may change; but His cannot, and that bounty which He once manifests to His people is inexhaustible.

He has promised too—He who "cannot lie"—that He will grant, not temporal, but eternal joys, to those whom He loves. "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." Can He fail to accomplish His Word? Let us often ponder on it. He has said, "I give unto them eternal life." And let us say with the apostle St. John,

when we think of this and a number of other similar promises, which the Lord has made to His people—"This is the promise which He hath promised us, even eternal life." If it was one of ordinary integrity, if it was one of known and tried kindness, though a fellow-creature liable to change, we should feel that we might confide in the promise with joy. But "this is the promise which He hath promised us"—He who has shown His love for us by coming to the cross, He who has a power equal to His goodness, He whose empire is the universe and who "does all His pleasure"—He who looks through all duration and foresees every possible contingency, He whose goodness is unsearchable. "He has promised us" eternal life. And if we are numbered amongst His disciples (which I pray that every immortal soul here may be), then, my brethren, we shall know that His promise cannot fail, and that "heaven and earth shall pass, but one tittle of His word shall never pass away."

When we think, then, of what God has promised—of the absence of all moral and of all natural evil, and of the vast enjoyments which those must have, who are with the Saviour and like Him, who share in His glory, and who have His promise of being completely happy—and that these joys are assuredly eternal, because our nature will then be immortal, because the blessings themselves are not liable to decay, because no external violence can deprive us of them, and because the fidelity of the Lord Jesus Christ to His own Word secures them for ever—may we not say with our text, "In Thy presence is fulness of joy, at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore?"

And yet, my dear friends, although these hopes ought so to animate each one who hears them, our Lord has warned us (and now eighteen centuries have fearfully proved how true the warning was), that when men heard of these blessings they would "make light of them." "They made light of them." And so have others—and so, my unconverted hearers, may you.

Perhaps even as I have thus feebly described them, you have said within yourselves—‘There is much in all this, for which I have no heart; I do not long for a world where all are holy, for I am unholy; it conveys no gladness to me to know that they shall love God perfectly, for I am alienated from Him; I do not wish to sin no more, because I love sin; it conveys no joy to me to think that in heaven I should not see sinners, because they are my chosen companions here; and therefore this glory and bliss in heaven, if they are suited to others, are not suited to me.’ But let me, my dear hearer, remind you even in this melancholy condition, that though you now cannot desire it, if by Divine grace your heart be changed you will be so altered in tastes and habits, that the prospect of this happiness will fill you even here with exulting joy. The children of God even now delight in the hope that they shall never offend their glorious Benefactor more, that they shall never sin again, that they shall have done with all that painful conflict they are now ordained to wage, that they shall offend their Maker no longer. All this now fills the heart of a believer with joy; and were you brought by grace to believe, it would fill *your* hearts too with hope and exultation. But besides that, is there nothing in all this, which speaks to your natural desire of happiness? Is there nothing in the entire and eternal absence of all pain, sorrow, destitution, anxiety, weariness, misery, death? Is not that a blessing, which even you feel you ought to secure? And if this is the condition of the eternal state—a condition which will leave an eternity of unspent bliss behind when you have lived as many years as you have lived moments now, nay as many years as there have been moments in the combined lives of all who ever existed on the earth, an eternity of unspent joy still to be entered on when you have spent as many ages as there have been moments in the earth’s existence—surely this ought to seem great enough to move even you to secure these unspeakable joys. And they will be *so soon*. Our time here is so short.

A few more years at the longest, and then you would enter on the possession of these undecaying joys. Ob! my friends, do not “make light of them;” in the name of God I ask you, not to “make light of them.” Do not refuse joys, that even your own minds ought to perceive to be so great. Our Saviour has told us, that those who esteem them aright find them to be a “pearl of great price,” for which they would be willing to sacrifice all. It is in that spirit, that I trust you will from this day seek them. Do not lose the blessings of heaven and eternity, because *you will* be negligent, because you will indulge in levity, because you will still live with the worldly and the proud. Do not forfeit these joys, because you must have a little more sin. Do not, when you compare blessings so vast with the momentary and false delights which you may find here upon earth, sacrifice the greater for the less, the eternal for that which is so transitory. But, my dear hearers, seek now—seek from this day—to secure these blessings in eternity. And as you know that none can enjoy them except they are “renewed in the spirit of their minds” and become the true disciples of Jesus Christ, that you may have these joys seek now to become the disciples of the Son of God. Seek now for that grace, by which, believing in Him with all your hearts, He may own you as His people and admit you to His presence

And you, my dear brethren, who have by grace laid hold on this offered salvation, let me remind you how meet and right it is, in the prospect of such blessings to be entered on so soon, that you should cherish the temper which God has declared in His Word He approves, and try to live as pilgrims and as strangers in this lower world. Of those who seek a city which is yet to come, “a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God”—of them He has declared that He will “not be ashamed to be termed their God.” Cherish then that spirit, by setting your affections on the things above, by often meditating on those great joys which are reserved for God’s people, and asking for the

grace to attend to His own exhortation—
 “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon
 earth, where moth and rust do corrupt
 and where thieves break through and steal;
 but lay up for yourselves treasures in hea-
 ven” (every day seeking to accumulate the
 joys of eternity, every day seeking to be
 prepared for a higher measure of bliss in
 heaven, “lay up for yourselves treasures in
 heaven,”) “where neither moth nor rust
 doth corrupt, and where thieves do not
 break through nor steal.” And if, while
 you are sojourners here below, it pleases
 God to try you with severe reverses—if you
 know poverty and bereavement and sick-
 ness and sorrow—cheer up in the hope of
 such a “rest remaining for the people of
 God.” It was in the prospect of that glory,
 that our Lord is said to have “endured the
 cross, despising the shame.” Be you, my
 friends, conformed to your great Head; and

looking to that blessedness remaining for
 God’s people, bear up under the heaviest
 cross, and tread with cheerfulness and con-
 stancy the roughest path, in which you are
 ordained to walk.

And lastly, if you know for yourselves
 how these thoughts sustain you in the hour
 of adversity and how they animate you to
 difficult duty, and what a glow they cast
 over the whole of human life, doubling
 every joy and diminishing every sorrow,
 then, brethren, seek earnestly to make your
 perishing fellow-sinners partakers in these
 blessings also; and ask God earnestly to
 give you the wisdom, the zeal, the charity,
 the constancy, the seriousness, the joyful-
 ness of mind, by which you may constrain
 many other sinners too to lay hold on a sal-
 vation, which will make you blest in eter-
 nity, and which administers to you so much
 comfort here.

THE PRESENT HAPPINESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE, SET BEFORE THE
UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 3, 1835.

"In that day, thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."
—Isaiah xii. 1—3.

GOD in His infinite mercy has addressed the most various motives to sinners in general, to induce them to turn to Him. Scarcely any motive that can act upon a rational being to induce him to any just mode of conduct is wanting (if perhaps a single one could be named) to induce him to turn to the Lord and find happiness in his service. Some of these motives are addressed to his conscience and his fear of suffering; and some are addressed to his hope of happiness. Among these latter we have already considered the promise of great (though distant) blessings in the other world. But God knows the extreme feebleness of our nature, and how much less apt we are to be moved by that which is unseen and distant (especially in the unregenerate state) than by what is immediate and tangible; and therefore He has been pleased to set before sinners in His Word the immediate happiness that they may enjoy in His service, as incomparably greater than any they can hope to have in this world while absent and alienated from Him. And this truth is set before us most strikingly in the words, which I have now read; in which God has shown how happy His believing people may be—and, when they walk closely with Him, how happy they are—in order that all sinners might see what a blessed exchange they will make in that day, when laying aside ungodliness and rebellion, they become with all their heart and with all their mind the disciples of Jesus Christ.

The eleventh chapter is a prediction of the advent and kingdom of the Saviour,

with its character; and the twelfth, which is a continuation of the eleventh, describes the temper of the Church of God during the reign of the Messiah. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me. **B**old, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation." It was predicted in these words, that this should be the temper of the Church of Christ; and therefore, that believers in general, the members of that church, should during the reign of Messiah be able to make this profession. It declares, that each believer should feel, that God, who had been angry with him, had forgiven him freely; and then that he should trust Him for all his future happiness, and say, "God is my salvation." And the last verse declares the consequences that would flow from that profession; "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." By this term, "The well of salvation" (or the fountain of salvation), we may understand either the Gospel, in which all covenanted blessings are contained; or rather the Almighty Himself, who speaks of Himself by the prophet Jeremiah as "the Fountain of living waters;" or Christ Jesus, who said when He was upon earth to those around Him, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." The "water," which flows from this well of salvation, we may understand to be the grace of God, and all the other blessings which come from His

covenant. The word is thus frequently employed in the Scriptures; as when it is said, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters"—that is, come to enjoy all the blessings contained in the Gospel; "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water"—that is, He would have given thee Divine grace and all covenant blessings; "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"—that is, let him come and receive the grace of God and all the blessings of the Gospel; "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink; this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Hence, then, the "water out of the wells of salvation" is the grace and blessing of God from day to day. And this is termed water out of the wells of "salvation," because it is connected with eternal life. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," our Lord said to the woman of Samaria, "but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Hence then this water, the grace and blessing of God, which leads the believer to eternal life, is that which it is here declared they should "draw;" that is, they should receive it by faith from day to day. Living a life of faith, they should enjoy the blessing and the grace of God from day to day and from hour to hour. And this His people shall do "with joy;" "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." It is connected with the two preceding verses by the word "therefore," which refers to those blessings which the people of God were to enjoy. They would be happy in receiving from day to day the grace of God, because He had forgiven them and because He was their salvation; that would be the first reason for their joy. And the second would be because they had the assurance of this. They should say, "I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away; behold, God is my

salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation." Thus it was predicted, that the children of God should during the reign of the Messiah have such an assurance of His pardoning mercy and such a trust in Him for blessings to come, that day by day they should receive His grace and favour by faith with joy of heart; in other words, that they should, as long as they were living in the exercise of faith, be happy from day to day in the Lord.

And as it was predicted that this should be, so has it happened as a matter of fact; and we all know, that in proportion as any man enjoys Divine grace, is his happiness instantly augmented. And this is a motive, and ought to be a constraining motive (and I trust to many present it will be so), to induce a careless person, throwing aside every false and delusive pleasure, to come and find his earthly, as well as his eternal happiness, in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, then, we have to consider the joy that flows from the sense of pardoned sin. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou comfortedst me; therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."

The first thing here declared to us is, that God does pardon the penitent believer. He was originally angry with him. "Thou wast angry with me." God is, and must be, according to His Divine perfections, angry with those who are living in a state of rebellion against Him. So that if a person is not a true believer in Jesus Christ, the wrath of God rests on him day and night; "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" day and night, go where he will, the wrath of an almighty and omniscient Being is around him. But when a person is brought to believe in Christ and to trust Him with His salvation, that anger is gone. "Though thou

wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away." The Lord Jesus has borne that wrath, which we deserved; we have "turned every one to his own way," but "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all." So that all that believe in Jesus Christ "are justified from all things." And thus "being justified by faith, they have peace with God." God is at peace with them. He is no more angry as He was, because He looks upon them, not as they are in themselves, but as in Christ, beholds them as those for whom Christ mediates, for whom Christ died, who are clinging to Christ alone for their salvation, who have renounced all other hope, who have learned to believe in Him and to trust Him; and God is angry with them no more. "Though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away." The Almighty, whose wrath is so fearful, is no longer angry with those, whom He has made His children in Christ. On the contrary, He accepts each believer. His sins shall be no more imputed to him; they shall no more be mentioned against him; he is legally acquitted; he is "justified from all things," and he is perfect in justification for ever. And as thus God is at peace with him, so he is at peace with God; the enmity of his heart being removed, and his dread of God changed into filial confidence and hope. He now looks up to God as One, who is reconciled and gracious to him; and he has no longer any reason to apprehend that the wrath of God rests upon him, or that he shall endure hereafter the punishment of sin.

And as this is the blessing itself, so is the believer, when faith is strong, assured of that blessing. And this assurance is declared to be the possession of the people of God in general. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." When a person is led to believe in Christ, he has the whole way of salvation (at least to a degree) marked out to him; and he sees in the Scriptures, and he learns experimentally, that God forgives believers freely and fully, for the sake of the Re-

deemer alone. He perceives, that God can be "just and the justifier of him that believeth." He credits the Word of God, and believes therefore that all who are penitent believers in Christ are absolutely and eternally forgiven. On the other hand, he himself believes; he is conscious of believing. He looks up to the Lord Jesus Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour, sees His ability and willingness to save, His goodness, and His glory; He looks at Him till he forgets himself, till he loves Him, till he trusts Him, till he sees that Christ is to him the salvation that he needs. He can rest on that Redeemer without looking for any thing in himself, and finds peace while he is committing himself entirely—body, soul, and spirit—to the care and government of that Redeemer, to be blessed for ever. And he therefore has no fear. When faith is strong, He sees in Christ all he needs. Christ is his whole "salvation." He has redeemed him from a present death in sin; He has rescued him from eternal death; He has justified his soul now, and will save it for ever. It is true, an enthusiast, who has no good ground for hope and who has no real faith in the Redeemer, may persuade himself falsely of all this: while he does not know Christ and while he has never seen the glory of Christ, he may yet come to the conviction that he is personally a favourite of the Most High, that he is a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ and an heir of heaven. But then he ought to examine what is the ground of that confidence. His faith is not resting on Christ; but it is resting on this falsehood—that he is a believer and that he is a saved soul. And if he would come to examine what are the grounds of that confidence he would find them all delusive. It is not real faith; there are none of the marks of a believer, and he has never been led to commit himself—body, soul, and spirit—to Christ for ever. And when he looks for the fruits of faith, he can find none of them there; no constraining love to his Creator and Saviour, nothing that compels him day by day to obey his Maker with love, no communion of heart with the Lord's people,

no love in the service of the Creator, no delightful communion in spirit with his God, no fond looking on to that eternal world which is prepared for believers. All this he has nothing of. And if he comes to examine whether he has that faith that leads to sanctification—whether there is that holiness, that love, that tenderness of conscience, that humility, that dread of sinning, that anxious and earnest desire to serve and obey God, and that purifying hope of glory—he cannot find them there. To him the apostle says—“Examine thyself, whether thou art in the faith;” and he will find it all delusive. But the Christian rests upon no such ground. Really seeing the glory of Christ as taught of God, and really committing himself to the care of that Redeemer, and conscious that there are daily gathering upon him the holy and blessed fruits of his faith, he can no more doubt that it is so with him, than Elijah could doubt that he trusted himself to the goodness and the care of God, when he placed himself in the celestial chariot, and was borne into the heavens. And thus the believer can say—“I will praise Thee; though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me.” Convinced, not so much by looking at himself as by looking at Christ, that he is a ransomed soul, that God has pardoned him and that He shall never be angry with him again, therefore he is made happy. “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

To know that God has forgiven him—to have that burden of guilt (sometimes so oppressive) removed—after having perhaps struggled hard to find peace and almost been in despair, not knowing how to obtain the consolation he sought, and thinking himself cast away from the favour of God, to have all the burden removed gives unspeakable consolation. A prisoner, who is expecting every moment the sentence of death, and sees his dungeon door thrown open, but finds that the message is a message of pardon and not of wrath—or the strong swimmer, struggling in the ocean, whose strength is spent and his hope failed, and who finds

then and seizes the rope thrown towards him—or the criminal pursued by the avenger of blood, who just as he was being overtaken reached the city of refuge—these with other and similar deliverances, have brought men to experience a blessed peace. But their change of circumstances is not comparable with that, which the burdened sinner feels, after he has trembled under the apprehension of wrath and finds it gone for ever—finds that the Almighty God, who might have sentenced him to everlasting misery, has removed His curse and made him His child.

But when I speak of this as a constraining motive why sinners in general should turn to God, they may feel, that ungodly persons have no such burden; they do not feel this dread of the Divine wrath, they are self-righteous, they are proud, they are indifferent, they are worldly; and therefore the consolation is valueless in their sight—at least as a source of present joy. Yet it is not always so. A little light let into the conscience, a little knowledge scatters those delusive and fantastical notions of religion, which they have gathered they know not whence, and may induce a conflict in them and a pang, as great as that which they despise in trembling sinners. But if it is not so, and if they continue indifferent to the close of life, I may tell them (if there are any such here now), that their absence of conviction of sin and dread of wrath is not for one moment to be compared with that settled peace, with that quiet joy, with that melting confidence, with that tender gratitude to God, which the Christian experiences when at length he sees how God is “just and yet the justifier” of his guilty soul—when he feels that all the wrath that was due to sin, is gone away for ever, and can look up to that Almighty God, whose attributes he viewed as awful and threatening, and can feel that “this God is his God for ever and ever, and will be his guide even unto death.” And therefore though now the sinner may not feel his need of such a consolation, he yet may be assured, that it is a consolation surpassing in value and in peace and in joy all that he

has ever yet experienced in a life of indifference and ungodliness.

But even this is not the only source of joy, which is here declared to be the possession of God's people upon earth. In the second place, there is a joy arising from trust in God for future blessings. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." It is here, in the second place, declared, that God is the salvation of a penitent believer—that the believer is confident that God is his salvation—and that this confidence makes him happy. And on this second ground, no less than from the assurance that he has of pardon, is he who lives in the exercise of a steady faith much happier than worldly persons can be, even on this side the grave.

First, God is become the "salvation" of a penitent believer. That is, he accomplishes his entire deliverance from sin and its consequences. He may engage the believer to much activity in "working out his salvation;" that activity may in itself be a source of delight: but it is God, who is the origin and accomplishment of the whole salvation. It is His mercy, His wisdom, His care, His power, His faithfulness, that originate and carry on and complete his salvation. "God is the salvation" of every believer in Christ. He saves him by his grace and mercy from that awful hell, of which we have several times been speaking—from all those unknown, eternal and intolerable sorrows, that await every ungodly and unpardoned soul. He not only saves him from hell, but He brings him to that glorious heaven, of which we have also spoken, and unfolds to him often here glimpses of that eternal glory, which awaits us fugitive transgressors when we are placed in that celestial world. He brings him safely there. All the joys of heaven will be his—his whoever is a sincere believer in Christ—because God has undertaken to bring him through, and he is

"kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." "God is his salvation" from all the power and torment of sin. He delivers him, by renewing his nature, by giving him a changed heart, from all the power of those evil habits, which previously prevailed—saves him from all the ungodliness of his nature, and in its place plants in his heart all those dispositions, which are in themselves so blessed and which are the sources of so much joy to the Christian. He grants to him every gracious disposition by the influence of His Spirit; making him humble, believing, tender in conscience, benevolent to His fellow-creatures, affectionately grateful to his God, hopeful of eternal happiness; giving him a melting contrition on account of sin, a holy dread of committing it, a holy love of obedience. He gives him blessed anticipation of the eternal state; making him spiritually-minded day by day even in his intercourse with the world.

And in the next place, "God is his salvation" from all present evil, and introduces him to the possession of all real good. This is very frequently expressed in the Word of God, that His people may rest on it with perfect confidence. Thus we read of the believer in the 121st psalm—"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; He shall preserve thy soul." And as He keeps him from evil, so does He communicate to him all necessary good; in the 84th psalm we read—"The Lord God is a sun and shield, the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." And hence the apostle Paul expresses undoubtingly, in the eighth chapter to the Romans, his assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God," being persuaded that since He has given the Lord Jesus Christ He will "with Him also freely give us all things." Hence then the Lord does not reserve all the blessings of His people for the eternal world, but pours out His treasures of mercy upon them even now. He grants to each person waiting on Him as much of present comfort as He sees to be fitting, averts from

him the calamities he dreads, protects him in seen and unseen dangers, surrounds him with His faithful providence which will not let any real harm happen to him, guards him against all the attacks of Satan, the force of evil example, and the unkindness of ungodly men around him. He gives to him even now innumerable blessings of Providence, rejoices his heart, heals his wounds, and if ever he is troubled and afflicted teaches him that it is all well and preparing him for a richer crown hereafter.

Now as this is the blessing God grants to His children, so are they persuaded of it. The prediction here is, that the people of God should during the reign of the Messiah say—"God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, He also is become my salvation." Every year that he lives, a Christian learns more humiliating lessons of his own unworthiness, folly, and weakness. He cannot trust himself, as he once did; and the stronger he does in fact become in religion and the more in fact he becomes conformed to the mind of the Redeemer, the more he learns his own feebleness, and to depend on Almighty grace. But then, if he has this painful sense of his own weakness, folly and sin, it is met and overcome by the proportionate confidence that he has in the strength of God. And he can say, "God is my salvation." He *knows* that He has saved him thus. He *knows* that he may depend on the almighty power of God. He is acquainted with the Divine perfections as revealed in His Word; he has learned them as taught by the Spirit of God experimentally. That is, he does not merely say that God is almighty, but he knows and feels His omnipotence; he does not merely say that God is a Sovereign, but it is an awful and a venerable truth that penetrates his inmost soul; he does not merely know as a theory that God is omniscient, but it is a truth that has made itself felt by him, and he sees every hour that God is surrounding him with that omniscient regard. Thus he knows the moral perfections of Jehovah. His holiness, His purity, His compassion, His faithfulness, His justice, His goodness,

all beam in upon the soul with unwonted glory. Others do not see them as though they really were; for while they speak of them as realities, they treat them as fables. But to the Christian, they are the most glorious verities; and he sees in them that which is the glory and the security and the bliss of the universe. On the other hand, he sees their relation to himself; and while he knows that God secures the happiness of His children, he has within him the testimony that *he* is a child. He knows it by the spirit, that God has given him; he knows it by the great change that has passed upon all his views and habits and affections; he knows it by the love he bears to his God and Saviour, because Christ is good and he loves Him, and he cannot fail to trust Him. And thus assured that God protects him and loves him, he may not only say that God is the salvation of His church, but he may say, "God is *my* salvation, I will trust and not be afraid." Though he is not now exempt from sin and sorrow, and is often tried by both, yet under all conceivable circumstances can he use these endearing words. Whatever be the amount of his past guilt, whatever the sense of his present sinfulness, whatever he knows of his folly and weakness, whatever the dangers he has to pass through, whatever the troubles he has to bear, whatever his bodily or mental weakness and decay, whatever the sorrows which try his heart, whatever he may see around him, though multitudes are rushing down to perdition, though there are many fair professors who become apostates, though he sees that there is danger everywhere, though Satan is a fearful enemy, though the world is exceeding wicked, though his heart is sometimes tempted to be afraid, yet he can say in the midst of all conceivable ill—"God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid."

And now, as God bestows upon His people this assurance that He is "their strength and their salvation," therefore it must fill them with abiding joy. "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." That is, a Christian, aware that "God is his salvation," must day by day

derive from Him grace and blessing, in the exercise of faith, with much joyfulness of heart. It is impossible for me to tell you, my dear friends, the innumerable sources of joy, which are opened upon a Christian when once he comes to Christ. Every thing then is calculated to make him happy. He must look with joy at his great escape, and feel it a blessed thing that he is at last placed in a state of safety. He must feel happy, to look down to that abyss from which he has been delivered and to look upward to that heaven whither he is going as his home. He must feel joy, to know that God has made him safe; *him*, who was trembling under a dread of overwhelming sorrow, and who was every moment approaching it and knew not how to escape from it. To feel that now God has made him safe for ever—it must make him happy. He must feel joy; just as that prodigal did, when he hung upon his father's bosom and wept tears of gratitude and contrition and joy, so when the Christian is brought to know the love of his Father in heaven for him, to think how God loves him, (*him*, who seemed only doomed to everlasting misery)—it must fill him with joy. He must rejoice in what he now knows of the power of grace, that has accomplished a change, which it seemed no existing force could accomplish; and now he sees it to be easy, and that that work is advancing, and he shall recover his lost perfection, and it must fill him with joy. Just as the Israelites, when they stood on the shore of the Red Sea, and saw those menacing enemies, whose arms they could so ill resist, overwhelmed by the avenging flood, augured from that the power that could conduct them through the wilderness and plant them in Canaan and scatter their enemies, so the Christian, when he sees the habits he thought he could not subdue gone, and what seemed to him insurmountable now powerless, can auger what the Lord will do for him; and he knows, that sooner or later He will plant him a glorified soul, in the kingdom of His Father above. And then the Christian cannot but rejoice in the hope of that glorious heaven, to which he

is going. He knows something of its joys; he feels them all congenial to his taste. The earthliness that once prevailed being removed, all spiritual joys are welcome to him. He loves to think of that time, when he shall sin no more, when he shall sorrow no more, when he shall be with the Redeemer he now trusts and loves, and shall employ his emancipated intellect and spend all the faculties of his glorified soul in the service of Him, whom he ought to love, and whom he does love a little. A Christian also thinks with joy of those daily habits, to which he is thus by grace introduced. He has fulfilled in him what Solomon has said in the fourteenth of Proverbs—"A good man shall be satisfied from himself." He is pleased when he reflects upon the daily habits, which God enables him to follow, of doing daily good. He is pleased with thinking that he is enabled to do right, that he mourns when he does wrong, that he is aiming after a faultless obedience to the will of God. He is pleased when he thinks of those renewed dispositions which the Almighty has given him, and feels that the pride of his nature is changed into something of lowliness, that the readiness with which he once sinned is changed into something of distaste, that he has a hatred of sin something like what God has. And when it makes him grateful, and when his heart gushes with gratitude to God, and when he looks at the whole change that is wrought in his mind, and thinks that there are the nascent (though feeble) graces in his heart something like those which appear in their full lustre in the kingdom of the Redeemer, then his soul is filled with joy. Besides which, a Christian rejoices every day in thinking of the Truth. He loves all the great truths that God has revealed, for their own sake; but besides that, there is a joy in feeling that he has found Truth. He was once groping his way in darkness; he did not know what Truth was. At one moment he fancied one thing to be true, and at another moment another, and perhaps settled down into a heartless and gloomy scepticism as to whether Truth could be found. But

he has found Truth. He rejoices at seeing all its evidences; he sees them in all their lustre, and feels that if assailed to all eternity those evidences will never be changed. And then he knows that he loves the truth—that he loves it all, that he would not conceal one truth—that his interests and feelings are attached to the cause of Truth for ever and ever. All this fills his soul with joy. And then he can rejoice in thinking of the Church of God around him. What a happiness it is to that redeemed and renewed soul, that no longer lives wholly for self (though he has still to mourn over selfishness), to know that so many are converted by the grace of God—to see miserable sinners plucked from the ruin they were bringing upon themselves and brought to Christ Jesus—to hear that the Church of God is enlarging in many lands—to learn what the grace of God does for those, who seemed to be most lost! What a joy it is to the Christian, to see how the grace of God is giving moral beauty to the characters of his fellow-creatures, once deformed with all the vices and follies that sin has brought into the world! What a joy, to see that the Church of God is not always to be “a little flock,” that it is destined to prevail over the whole earth, and that men’s prejudices and errors (aye, and their enmity too,) are doomed to final overthrow, and that with one heart and one voice they shall crown his Saviour “King of kings and Lord of lords,” “all nations blessed in Him, all nations calling Him blessed!” A Christian, too, rejoices in the supreme dominion of the Almighty. He knows at last (what perhaps before he never even dreamt of), that now infinite wisdom, goodness, and love are at the head of the universe—that God, by that wisdom, goodness, and love, is ordering all things for the best. Not only can he see, that the small amount of evil which he is forced to mourn over will be eventually overwhelmed, and almost lost sight of, in the mighty mass of happiness that the supreme government of God will bring upon His creatures, but He can see further than this (at least he can believe it, though

he does not see how)—that it will be actually subservient to the highest interests of countless millions of intelligent creatures in countless worlds, whom God will make to rejoice the more, because they have seen what sin is and how His mercy redeems men from sin. The Christian can rejoice too in the Lord Jesus Christ—in that good and gracious Saviour, to whom he has committed his soul for ever. He has given himself up to His care, he has placed himself under His controul, he has yielded himself to His government; and now he can rejoice in His perfections. He can look at all that moral glory which surrounds the whole character of the Redeemer, till he is filled with delight. He can see that He is so majestic, and yet so lowly—that He is so holy, and yet so merciful—that He is so just, and yet so forgiving—that He has such a hatred of sin, and yet is so patient to him, a sinner; he can see that He has a tenderness of compassion, that comes down to all his wants; he can read in that inscription on the cross, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews,” a love which eternity cannot exhaust and which no finite intelligence has ever fathomed; he can see in Christ a Saviour, that must eventually rescue him from all ill, that has laid hold on his trembling soul and will never let him perish; and thinking what a Saviour Christ is, and how He is placed between him and everlasting sorrow, he can (at times at least) rejoice in Him “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” And lastly he learns to think with unspeakable joy of the ever-blessed God; of Him who is revealed in Immanuel, whose glory shines out in the whole work of redemption, whose perfections are the perfections that appeared in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he rejoices in thinking of his covenant God—his God, his Father, for ever—whom without presumption he may call his Father—who has himself given him the right to use that endearing name; and he can think—*My Father in heaven* is almighty to save me from all evil, omniscient to know every remedy for every sorrow that ever I bear; *my Father* is omnipresent, and will never lose sight of me for one moment

to eternity; *my heavenly Father* is holy, and will make me holy as Himself, and all He does will be holy to all eternity; *my Father* is full of love—"God is love"—the infinite God I trust is full of love, and all His government must be marked and known at last to be penetrated and pervaded by that governing principle, which determines all He does. And thus when he dwells endlessly on all that is revealed in Scripture of the perfections of his God and Father, his whole soul is filled with joy.

Oh! my brethren, if even here in this fallen world, to lie sometimes on the rich soft turf, and to feel the breeze playing over your countenance, and to see before you mountain and glen and forest and gushing cascade and glassy lake and rippling stream, lawns of luxuriant verdure and knolls of the richest foliage, with the bright sun in the firmament filling all heaven and earth with glory, can fill the soul with delight and gladness, till tears of joy run down your cheeks, what must it be to gaze on the unclouded brightness of Him who formed it all, and see how *that sun* lights up the moral universe with happiness and joy, filling all the hosts of celestial and sinless beings (with those who are sinless too, because redeemed,) with unutterable gladness! And this is something of the joy of the believer even now. He knows that glorious God; he rejoices in Him even now; and he looks forward to that day, when he shall see all the loveliness of His nature and all the glory of His works.

Now, careless and ungodly persons (however hard)! if you dare defy your Maker's wrath, can you resist His loveliness? If you are unmoved by the fear of being undone for ever, will you not feel the bliss of being His children? If you do not care now to avoid misery, will you not secure good that is so instant and so great? If the blessings of eternity fail to move your short sighted-minds, do not these blessings *now* touch your hearts? Even now, be assured, you would be incomparably happier, incomparably better off, if you were Christians. If God gave you His grace, and you could this day give your hearts entirely

to the Redeemer, give yourselves up to His care and government and love to save you and sanctify you and bless you and make you holy for ever—if you could do so, this joy would be yours.

Perhaps you say, that you do not see that Christians are so happy. It is because they are in the beginning of their course; it is because their faith is feeble yet; it is because it is right there should be often a time of humiliation before the time of joy comes. But you may be assured, not only on the authority of God's Word (which is enough,) but on the evidence of facts, indisputable, innumerable, that strong and steady faith leads to all that happiness, of which I have spoken.

But perhaps you say, that this joy does not suit your taste. You love the world, you love your present pursuits and pleasures, you love your present companions and all the aims which occupy a worldly mind; and you have no heart for this spiritual and thoughtful happiness. But remember this, that if you were changed, if you had a new heart, then would your tastes follow, and you would have a desire after this happiness. And meantime you may see now, that were that change once accomplished, you would be incomparably happier men or happier women than you are at this moment. You may know well, that if you could be assured that God had forgiven your sins for Christ's sake—if you knew that He was your everlasting Saviour, that your Creator and Judge was your Friend—if you could enter upon those holy habits, if you could feel those good affections springing up in your hearts—if you had that rational hope of happiness hereafter—it would make you far happier than you ever have been.

What, then, should you do? It is not your happiness now, and you have no taste for it at present; what should you do? Why, first, my dear friends believe it. Look at the proofs of it carefully, till you come to this complete conviction—"I know that a thorough Christian must be far happier than I am, I know if I were a Christian I should be far happier than I ever have been." It is

a blessing to come even to that conviction. And when you have come to that conviction, then (as becomes a person to whom God has given his reason and his will for this very end) immediately set about pursuing this happiness, that you may have it for the years you have to remain here. Could you be a Christian to-day, you would be better off here; could you give your heart to Christ, you would lose nothing that deserves to be called happiness, and you would gain a peace and a joy, of which now you have no conception. Then seek to be a Christian to-day. Defer not these better blessings for a single day. Try to cast in your lot among the people of God. Think of these blessings, till you feel how good God is, to offer them to you, who have so long outraged His authority, trampled on His laws, and defied His wrath; think what mercy it is, that invites you to be saved.

And will you yet, my dear hearers, reject all this mercy, when you know that the apostle says of those, who "after their hardness and impenitent hearts" "despise the riches of the goodness and forbearance of God," that they "treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" Is it possible, that when on the one hand, a known, tried, certain happiness even now, even from the moment of your attaining strong and steady faith, is ascertained to you by the mercy of God, and on the other hand are only the delusive, intoxicating, drunken, criminal joys, that belong to one who is following his own will—is it possible, that you can prefer the latter? When there is an ever-flowing fountain of water, "clear as crystal," will you go to the muddy cistern "that can hold no water," and delight yourself with nothing but the filth that remains (for all the water has run off), and for *this* forsake that clear and sparkling spring? Oh! what must be the guilt of that preference in God's sight! It is enough of guilt, to dis-

regard the blessings of eternity; and what infatuation is yours! Well may He call heaven and earth to witness against you, if when you know how happy God makes His people even here, you still prefer your sin. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; for My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." To leave all the joy that God gives to His people, for all the remorse, shame and regret, the indifference, worldliness, sin, which are all that remain for you—oh! it will cover you with shame for ever. If you do not feel it now, it will be the worm that gnaws your heart to all eternity.

Oh! my dear friends, be persuaded to seek in Christ this present joy. Try whether religion will not make you happy; try whether it is not a blessed thing, to be entirely the servants of God. And if you are convinced of it, then do not seek for that half kind of religion, which accounts for many who seem to be religious having so little joy; but aim at giving yourselves up fully to the service of your Maker, which the apostle says is a "reasonable service." Resolve that the rest of your days shall be God's—that strictly Christian principle shall govern every habit, shall employ every faculty, shall determine every aim, shall dispose of all you have. Be determined that God shall be your God entirely, and you altogether given up to His service, if you would taste the joy of His people. And then ask Him for that grace, by which this mighty change may be effected; and you, who have been hitherto living in what seemed to be irreclaimable insensibility, may by infinite love surpass many that have long been in the ways of God, in the blessedness, and love, and gratitude, and joy, and peace, which God pours into the hearts of His people.

SERMON XIX.

THE UNCONVERTED ENCOURAGED BY THE SALVATION OF GREAT SINNERS.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 3, 1839.

“ And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry: who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy: that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.”—1 Timothy i. 12—16.

OWING to the natural self-complacency of our hearts, it is exceedingly difficult to convince men in general of their guilt before God, and of their absolute need of a salvation which must be of His mere mercy through the merit of Jesus Christ. Men in general, therefore, under the influence of self-righteousness and vanity, make light of those blessings which the Gospel offers, because they do not feel their need of them. But as soon as a person is convinced of his great danger—the need he has of salvation through Christ—from that moment he encounters the opposite danger (a danger sometimes as fatal as the former), which is to limit the mercy of God and to suppose that he cannot be forgiven. Perceiving now something of the greatness of his guilt, and not having corresponding views of the merit of the Redeemer or of His mercy, and not perceiving distinctly how God would be glorified in his forgiveness, he therefore is disposed to think that he cannot be forgiven. He is ready to allow, (what is so plainly written in the Word of God,) that He is merciful—ininitely merciful; but then he knows that God is, in fact, glorified in the death of some transgressors, and he fears lest he should be of the number of those who are excluded from His mercy. This greatly wrongs the Divine mercy: and the doubt comes entirely, in such cases, from very inadequate conceptions of the goodness of God. If such a person did perceive the greatness of the sacrifice which Christ has

made, with the immensity of His compassion—if he perceived all the mercy of God as a renewed person perceives it—then he would be ashamed of his doubt, which dishonours God as much as it injures himself, and he would be led to be a rejoicing believer in Christ Jesus.

I may address some such here this evening; who are no longer utterly careless about their eternal state, but are greatly alarmed in this respect, and who would be glad, if they could, to find peace in Christ. It may be, that God may make use of that portion of His Word which I have now read, to convince such that there is mercy for them, and to animate them to those prompt and persevering efforts, by which they may themselves be set upon a rock, have their feet established in the ways of God, and they themselves become rejoicing believers.

God has revealed to us in His Word, that His nature is Mercy. The name, by which He loves to be known and by which He is frequently designated in Scripture, was this, which He pronounced to Moses; “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness, and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.” While He is a God that cannot pass by transgression without a proper atonement, and who will not, yet observe how those terms are accumulated which speak of His

mercy, and how certain it is that the penitent believer, who does rely on Christ's atonement for salvation, may and will be forgiven by a God so merciful. He has told us, by the prophet Micah, that there is no one like Him, "passing by transgression" and "pardoning iniquity," and that because "He delighteth in mercy." It is not a cold act of the Divine government, when a sinner is forgiven; it is not a dry and official decree, in which He takes no interest; but the Lord "delighteth in mercy." He knows well the case of every sinner He forgives, all the dangers which he is about to encounter, all the misery into which he would have sunk; and when He forgives such a sinner, He does it as a God who "delighteth in mercy." This is the only account we can give, why the Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven. It was because God had such "delight in mercy," that He appointed that astonishing sacrifice, that He accomplished that great scheme of redemption, and thus made provision for perishing sinners. And the joy which He feels in forgiving the returning penitent has been well described by our Saviour, in that beautiful parable of the prodigal son, constructed by Him for this very purpose, that He might show us the dispositions, with which our heavenly Father views each returning penitent, though he has been like that prodigal son; and as we may read that the father rejoiced over that emaciated child, when, poor and miserable as he was, he returned with trembling steps to his father's door, and as we can imagine the feelings which were poured forth from his parental heart when he said, "This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found," let us remember that there was no idle intention in the Saviour's heart merely to delight us by a narrative in itself beautiful, but the intention was to show the mind of God towards each returning penitent, and to assure every sinner here, that thus, if he returns, he may be welcomed by his offended and injured, but most merciful Father in heaven.

And as this is what God has declared of Himself in His Word, so there are vari-

ous instances upon record, to show that God does in fact thus forgive sinners--that He not only forgives the best, but that He can forgive the worst. I do not mean that the conversion of those, who have gone furthest in iniquity, is by any means so common as that of others, who have perhaps received religious impressions in their earliest childhood, have been trained up in the habits of religion, and whose hearts have never been hardened by a course of any great violation of conscience; I believe that such are much more frequently drawn to God. Yet still there are instances enough on record, of those who have gone far in ungodliness and then been brought back to true conversion, to show us that God is willing to draw such--that when once such a sinner even is convinced of his guilt and seeks mercy through Christ, he may find it. Manasseh, we are told, surpassed his predecessors on the throne of Judah in wickedness; and he did this after having had the advantage of a remarkably pious parent, who from his earliest childhood feared and loved God. Still, though he thus set such an example of wickedness as deluged the country with misery and sin, yet was he in his sorrow penitent and forgiven. We read in the Gospel, of another sinner, who having heard the glad tidings of a free and full salvation through the Redeemer, was so penetrated with gratitude, that in the midst of the scorn of an assembly of Pharisees, she could wash the Redeemer's feet with her tears and wipe them with the hairs of her head; and while scorned by that self-righteous company, she heard the Redeemer say to her, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." We read of another--Zaccheus--who, though he was evidently stained by acts of injustice and oppression, and had so notoriously violated equity, that those around him complained that Jesus paid any attention to one who was such a sinner, yet still was sought out by the Lord in His mercy, brought to conviction and contrition, to belief and to pardon, and made a rejoicing believer in Christ Jesus. Need I repeat another remarkable instance of the mercy which God shows to great transgressors--one

whose life probably had been a life of eminence in crime, but who certainly up to his last hour was an unpardoned and impenitent transgressor?—yet did he receive forgiveness when he was on the very verge of eternity—a witness of God's compassion, even when hanging on the cross, despising and deriding the Saviour.

But the greatest instance of all that we have in the book of God, is that which is found in our text. It was the apostle Paul, who was reserved especially to magnify the mercy and the grace of God, in pardoning a wicked opponent of His Gospel. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," he says "who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The apostle here magnifies the mercy of God in these two particulars, noticeable in his history; first, that such a sinner as he should receive forgiveness, and, secondly, that such a forgiven sinner should receive such abundant grace. In both these respects he tells us too, that he was a pattern to those who should afterwards believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them, which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." All those, in fact, who should afterwards be convinced of sin and tremble on its account, should learn that there was mercy for them from seeing that there was mercy for him; and in witnessing his remarkable example, they should feel a hope spring up in their hearts, that Jesus Christ would show the same compassion to them, and in that hope would be led to the Saviour and receive the salvation of their souls. You observe then, my brethren, that this example, which I propose now to examine, has been given for the very purpose, that you amongst others (I mean those in this assembly, who are convinced of sin, but are

dreading lest the Lord should not forgive such as they are,) might be persuaded by it, that God has compassion even for you, and is ready to welcome you at this very moment, if only you are enabled to receive the message of His love.

First, then, let us notice the forgiveness which was granted to the apostle Paul. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious; but I obtained mercy." Now if we consider the circumstances of St. Paul's early life, we shall perceive at once how great that compassion was, which God manifested in His pardon. He was endowed with considerable abilities. He was not, from his early childhood, a careless and headstrong youth, devoted to folly and pleasure, and with no leisure for a single thought of religion; but he was a grave and studious youth, who had given much attention to the Scriptures, and had an opportunity of acquiring all the knowledge which might be then possessed of God and truth and duty. Further, he lived in Jerusalem—in that place where the Church of Christ was originally founded; he lived amongst some of the most remarkable Christians that the world has ever seen, and he had abundant opportunities of knowing both the doctrines which they believed and the lives which they lived. Recal for an instant the character given of those Christians at the time when he was living at Jerusalem, and you may see how much he sinned in refusing to acknowledge the grace of God in them. Numbers were signally converted by that remarkable evidence which God gave, that Christ was risen from the dead, and that the persecuted and murdered Jesus was the promised Saviour of mankind. And when thus converted, they continued diligent in the use of the means of grace. They were remarkable for their habits of devotion; there was a godly reverence towards the Divine Being, manifested in their whole deportment; miracles were wrought among them, in proof of the commission of the apostles; they showed so remarkable a kindness one to another, that it is said, "they were of one heart and of one soul."

When numbers among them, on account of their faith, were reduced to destitution, the others, with almost unexampled generosity, provided for their wants. They were filled with "joy and peace in believing," "eating their meat with gladness and singleness of heart;" they abounded in thanksgiving to God; their conduct was so exemplary, that even the multitude that did not believe, noticed it with admiration; and daily through their instructions and their conduct, did God add to the church such as should be saved. Among these Christians, whose numbers were daily increasing, Paul lived. He had too a full opportunity of learning all that might be known respecting the Saviour. He might have known well, that the prophecies were signally accomplished in His birth, ministry, and death; he might have learnt, that His doctrines were in exact harmony with the Old Testament, which he himself believed; he might have seen, that His life was such, that none but one who was from God could have lived it; he might have been assured by unimpeachable evidence, that He had risen from the dead and was ascended to glory; he might have known from all this, that He was indeed the long-promised Saviour; he might too have seen in the early church such a specimen of Divine grace as the world had never seen. Yet all these opportunities were not merely lost, but they were turned into mischief by the blindness of his heart, by his unconquerable prejudice, by the natural enmity of his mind to God, and only increased that bitterness of soul towards Christ and His people, which made Him "exceeding mad against them," "breathe out threatenings and slaughter against them," take long journeys to persecute them, drag men and women to prison, standing by when they were put to death, hastening their execution, giving his voice against them when they were to be sentenced, stirring up others and leading them on in all the cruelties which they practised against the saints of God—for which ever afterwards he considered himself the chief of sinners. Thus, brethren, did he, whose advantages were so

great, turn them all into the means of greater sin; and not content with indifference but rather moved with burning enmity, endeavour, if possible, to crush that faithful sect in its very origin, and to blot out the very name of the Redeemer from the earth. Yet *this man* was met by that Saviour whom he had persecuted, sought out in the midst of his enmity? in the very height of his career, of his unjust opposition to the Gospel, was he sought out by the mercy of the Saviour; he was convinced of sin, he was brought to contrition, he was made to ask in thorough subjection of heart, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" He was a pardoned transgressor; he was "a chosen vessel to bear His name to the Gentiles." After such an example of a pardoned sinner as that, who ought to despair? There are few, who have been guilty of so much iniquity as was the apostle Paul. Such abilities, such means of knowledge, living in the midst of such Christians, and yet urged by all to such open and such violent enmity against the Gospel—he is an instance, which, happily for the world and happily for themselves, men very seldom equal. That this sinner, this blaspheming persecutor, should be freely and fully pardoned—not after a long course of penitence, not when he had by his own researches found out the truth, not when he had showed that his heart was more disposed to goodness than that of another, but in the very height of his wickedness and when he was on the very point of accomplishing a scheme of iniquity, should be humbled, and made to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be forgiven, for a pattern to all who in after ages should hear of the mercy of Christ, and be invited to come to Him and live—if any one here considers attentively that great monument of the mercy of Jesus Christ, I am persuaded he must feel that there is mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ great enough even for him, and that his case is not more hopeless than that of one who had so sinned and yet was so signally saved.

But, in the second place, it may increase our sense of the Divine mercy, to observe

the grace that was bestowed upon this forgiven sinner. The apostle adds in the passage before us, "the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Whatever he was from that day, he was by the grace of God. When he had led a life of almost unexampled devotedness, he ever said with equal humility and gratitude, "By the grace of God I am what I am." When he spoke of his intense and untiring zeal to build up those, who by his instrumentality were brought to believe in Christ, he told the Colossians that he did it "according to His working which worked in him mightily." So that it was grace, and grace alone, which made him what he afterwards became. And this grace, he tells us, in the first place, was "abundant with faith." This grace, from that day when the Lord Jesus Christ by power and love subdued his obdurate heart, led him to an undoubting faith in himself. He believed all that was revealed of him in the Scriptures, with an undoubting assurance; he believed it as what he had seen with his own eyes, with equal certainty; he believed that Jesus Christ was the only Saviour of lost men! he believed in the great doctrines which were revealed to him concerning that Redeemer; he believed and fully trusted in Him on all occasions and in all the events of life, so that the whole course of his life was a course of faith, and he could say, "The life which I live in the flesh, is a life of faith in the Son of God." He expected the accomplishment of His promises; he looked up to Him for protection in every duty, for support in every difficulty; and in every scene of arduous labour he could say, "Thanks be to God that giveth me the victory." He looked to Him for all the strength that he needed in every necessity; and he could say, in the midst of every trial, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." His faith gave him an undoubted assurance of the presence, the power, the love, the faithfulness of the Redeemer, which he resolved never to question more. And thus the grace of God was abundant with faith. He tells us, too, that that grace

was abundant "with love;" that is, it wrought in him mightily by that love, which the Holy Spirit implanted. Believing all this of Jesus Christ, he was compelled to love Him. He felt that he owed Him a debt of gratitude and service, which would never be obliterated—a debt that could never be paid; he could say from that time, "Whether I live I live to the Lord, or whether I die I die to the Lord; whether living or dying, I am the Lord's." And when he lived a life of such assiduous labour and constant self-denial, that they thought him mad, he gave this account of that life—"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." This love to the Lord Jesus Christ was in fact the secret of his extraordinary labours. These two—the faith which he had in the Lord Jesus, and the love which he bore to Him—became henceforth the master principles of his whole life. They formed his character; they governed his conduct; they urged him to effort; they bore him up under suffering; they made him persevere, and filled him with joy and gladness to the end of his life. And this faith and love in the Lord Jesus Christ, inspired him with an overflowing benevolence towards his fellow-creatures. The Jews, who persecuted and hated him, received from him kindness in return; so that it is said, that when he saw their obduracy and observed how numbers rejected the Gospel to their own ruin, he had "continual sorrow and heaviness of heart" on that account. Turning to the heathen—he manifested an unwearied zeal for their labour, traversing various countries, visiting unknown regions, that he might make the people acquainted with that Saviour of whom they had never heard. But it was for those who were converts to Christianity through his instrumentality, that he reserved his special tenderness. Towards them his overflowing heart unreservedly displayed itself; he could speak of them as his "little children;" he

loved them with an affection beyond that which is usually seen in the most gentle and tender parents, though he combined with it qualities more vigorous and firm than are ordinarily found in the parental breast. When absent, he never forgot them: He bore them on his heart in prayer; he wrote to them the most affectionate letters, almost unequalled as they are still invaluable; and he retained all this yearning affection to the end. Thus was he animated in his course. For this he endured every sort of hardship, and laboured with his own hands to maintain himself and to aid his companions in labour; for this he cheerfully endured all sorts of persecutions; bonds and imprisonment, and beating never diverted him from that course, on which he had entered and in which he persevered. He fulfilled his ministry, arduous as it was, with joy: although he had given up all the prospects of his youth, and though he had forsaken all the friends of his early life, and though he had exposed himself to the enmity of all his countrymen, and though he was marked as an especial butt for their indignation and malice in every place that he visited, and though he could not even be secure of his life, yet still was that ministry fulfilled with joy, and he thought nothing of these things, nor "counted his life dear to him so that he might finish his course with joy." And when he had brought numbers, that have never been counted, to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus, and planted many churches in various lands, and superintended them all with the care of a parent, and raised up and trained evangelists, such as Timothy and Titus, and when he had written to them inspired epistles filled with the Spirit of God—when thus, for years, he had testified his fidelity to the truth, and gratitude to Christ—then he finished his noble course with exulting confidence saying—"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

In all this, no less than in the forgiveness of his sins, was he "a pattern to them who

should hereafter believe on Christ Jesus to life everlasting;" so that the worst sinners, sinners like Saul of Tarsus, have reason to believe not only that the mercy of Christ is great enough to forgive them, but that it is great enough to bid them surpass their fellows in devotedness, in piety, and in usefulness. He was not, from the day when he was forgiven, condemned to silent austerity, to miserable gloom, and to harassing doubts; nor was he condemned never to be acknowledged by his brethren, and never to know that he was a Christian; but his heart was filled with joy, his brethren loved him, and his life was useful from the day that he believed in Christ. And so those who are forgiven may always be assured that the forgiveness which Christ grants is complete. The mind of a Christian is not like that of a man who is grappling with many secret misdeeds. The mercy of the Divine Being is much greater than the mercy of men: "as heaven is higher than the earth, so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts, and His ways higher than our ways." And when He forgives freely and fully and for ever, He forgives to bless, He forgives to fold His recovered child to His heart, and to pour out upon him all his paternal tenderness. So that you, my fellow-sinners, who are now doubting whether Christ can forgive you at all, are encouraged to look to His unbounded mercy to make you another monument of His grace, like that Saul of Tarsus, who became the apostle Paul.

All that we know of the Divine plan of salvation serves to show that in forgiving sinners God may glorify Himself. Now remember, that when any sinner is forgiven, who has offended much, this especially magnifies the mercy of God in pardoning. Remember, that whenever one whose sins have been unusually great is saved and forgiven for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, it serves to show to the world, it is God's message to the world, to tell of the greatness of the Redeemer's merits and to proclaim everywhere that He is "able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." Remember, that whenever one

whose iniquity and ungodliness have been unusually great, and whose heart has been peculiarly immoveable and hard, is brought to manifest a corresponding devotedness to Christ, it glorifies the power of Divine grace. It serves to show that there is nothing too hard for God to accomplish; it illustrates that word of the apostle, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." Remember that thus, when one, who has peculiarly sinned is afterwards peculiarly blessed, then is he more likely to be of use to God and to the church and those around him; and the very fact that he so sinned against God, and that he is by grace so recovered, may serve, as in the case of St. Paul, to animate not a few to seek that great salvation which has so blessed and saved him. And therefore there is nothing to hinder each one who looks to the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation, from expecting the very greatest blessings as the result of the Divine mercy manifested through that Saviour.

And this, my brethren, has not been confined to the earliest times of the church. Remember there are instances on record in later days, which exactly illustrate how God is able to forgive, convert, and bless. If you would seek out persons, who were remarkable for their devotedness, their gratitude, their abundant zeal for God, you would select John Newton, John Bunyan, Colonel Gardiner; and remember, that all these men, so unexampled in their religious conduct afterwards, were remarkable for the length they had gone in wickedness before. They were all remarkable for the obduracy of their hearts, till God in mercy turned them; and all their subsequent conduct shows, not only how ready He is to forgive, but how able He is to grant eminent grace to those whom He draws to Himself.

Let me, therefore, beseech you, my fellow-sinners, you who are brought to a conviction of your ruined state, who see that there is no salvation for you but in Christ, and who desire to possess an interest in the blessings which Christ has purchased, by

being turned to God—let me beseech you to believe, when you see these instances that God has mercy enough to forgive even you. Do not so limit His grace, do not cast such dishonour upon Himself, as to suppose that He has not grace enough to pardon and to bless you. And do not hope merely to be forgiven, but as you have "offended much," so hope that through His Spirit working in your hearts He may ere long make you as signally the monuments of the power of His grace as of the greatness of His mercy. Remember, my dear hearers, that God may accomplish in you, all that He has accomplished in others. There are it is too true, but few instances of such conversions, in order that those who have sinned the most, and who may most deeply feel the enormity of their conduct, may be led to earnestness, humiliation and penitential tears; but there are instances enough to make us perceive, not only that it is possible for God to forgive and bless great sinners, but easy too. They are shown these instances, to animate them to instant effort, to give them an immediate hope, to cheer them on in that first stage, which is so humiliating and trying, by which the sinner is turned "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." It is not always—perhaps it is not often—a very long period; but as the apostle Paul was three days in darkness and doubt, solitude and sorrow, deeply convinced but without peace, so it may be that you also may, for the future establishment of your Christian character, for your deeper humiliation, to excite in you more abundant gratitude, and to quicken you to value more the grace which God thus gives you—you may also pass through a season of deep humiliation, anxiety and doubt. But it is all for the best. Bear it patiently; bear it as those who have sinned, and look onward in hope of that blessed hour, when the mercy of God shall set you free. And then, my dear friends, do not expect only to be forgiven, but look to serve Him diligently. Remember that this natural feeling ought to occur to every mind; those who have been forgiven little love little, and those who have been for-

given much love much. Why was it, that the weeping penitent washed Christ's feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head? Why was it, that in that crowded assembly she ventured to expose herself to scorn and enmity, to honour One whom all despised? Why was it, that she sat humbly at His feet whom all rejected? He tells us that "she loved much, because she had had much forgiven." And this was the motive of the apostle's life—because he had had "much forgiven." Therefore was he animated to those unwearied labours and to that untiring self-denial, which he manifested afterwards. And it is my advice to you, my hearer, that instead of limiting your thoughts to your sins, and instead of expecting to take merely some obscure and melancholy road to heaven, a path of difficulty and disquietude—that you should expect to find the full and free mercy of God—that you should ask for eminent grace, as you have shown perhaps eminent hardness—that you should try to fill up the remainder of your days with earnest and grateful duty—that because you have done much to injure others, you should now be anxious to do much good—that having dishonoured Christ, you should strive for the remaining years to honour Him as much; and though you can make no atonement for the past, and must go to the grave as completely the debtor of infinite mercy as when you first heard of forgiveness, yet do all you can to testify your love, and to show that you bear the burden of gratitude with joy, that you feel it is right that your whole being should be dedicated to Him, who has snatched you from the jaws of hell and will raise you to a throne in glory. As you have had "much forgiven," "love much." Try to surpass your brethren in all Christian graces—to know more, to serve more, to labour more, than they do; and if you have but little time in which you can do it, then give yourselves earnestly to prayer that God may accomplish all His work in you, as it was accomplished in the apostle Paul, and that you may be another monument not only of His mercy, but of the omnipotence of His grace.

But if there are any here, whose hearts are tempted (alas! that our nature can be so corrupt!)—if there are any here, who are disposed to abuse the mercy of God, and to say, as the apostle says in the name of a rejecter of the Gospel, "Let us sin, that grace may abound," "Let us sin on, that God may be glorified in pardoning," "Let us sin more and take our fill of sin, that God's grace may be magnified when we are changed"—let them remember that the apostle answers their objection and condemns their feeling, by one short sentence—"Whose damnation is just." Just; most just! Where—where in the whole world, in all the varieties of crime to be found on this disordered and wicked earth—where is such crime as this? 'Because the Almighty is so merciful that He has sent me a Redeemer, because He is so merciful that He can pardon the vilest, therefore I will go on to outrage Him, therefore I will a little more incur His wrath, therefore I will steel my hard heart yet more against His unbounded love, therefore I will love that which He hates and I will do that which He forbids!' "Whose damnation is just."

And I will add—"Whose damnation" is usually accomplished. For remember that the apostle says of himself here, "For this cause I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." He had repelled the light, it is true; for that he looked upon himself as the chief of sinners. But he had never believed in Christ; he never knew of salvation by the Son of God; he never had said, "Let us sin, that grace may abound;" he never had thus "trampled under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing, and done despite unto the Spirit of grace." If there is any wretched sinner here, who has abused the mercy of God, so that it has encouraged him in sinning against God—who has perhaps lived thirty or fifty years already in hardness of heart, and who says, "I will live ten more"—let him remember that king Saul sinned against the light, and he perished miserably in his sins, although he shed many tears of bitter remorse; let him remember that Judas sinned against

the light, and though his remorse was too painful to be endured, his sin was too great to be forgiven ; let him remember that Ananias sinned against the light, and though he had given his property to promote the cause of God, he too perished in his sin. Let him remember, that those who have thus manifested hardness against the light, have not received mercy. I know of no such instance in the Word of God. And therefore, if any one here should abuse the infinite goodness of God to encourage him to go on another year or another month in sin, woe be to that unhappy rebel !

Oh ! my friends, do not venture any longer to offend against that greatest (as He is the best) of Beings. This moment you know that you are sure of forgiveness in Christ ; this moment you know that God is merciful. Perhaps you never yet had so distinct a view that the infinite God, your Creator, your Preserver, your Judge, is ready to pardon you. That moment may be a crisis in your life ; that conviction may

open the door to your everlasting welfare. But if after that you will sin against God, perhaps you never may repent ; perhaps you never will have that full conviction come to your heart again, that God is ready to pardon even you. And therefore, now use that feeling well. Use it, I beseech you, as becomes immortal beings ; use it, as those who are in the presence of God ; use it, as those who cannot flee from God, who are with God—with God wherever you go from this house of prayer, His eye upon you, His hand sustaining you, His power allowing you still to breathe, His Book registering every act, His judgment awaiting you. Oh ! my dear hearers, go and ask that you may not, like Ananias, like Saul, or like Judas, show in your eternal ruin that God is just towards those who are irrecoverable in their sin ; but that by the usefulness and piety of your whole lives, by faith and love and hope, you may manifest the greatness of that grace that can save all men, and therefore can save you.

SERMON XX.

CHRIST WILLING TO SAVE THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 10, 1839.

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”—Isaiah lv. 1.

How immensely great, my brethren, is that salvation, which God has provided for believers in Christ through the death of His dear Son! What an immense deliverance have they experienced, who were lately the bond-slaves of Satan and the heirs of hell, but are now through grace the children of God and the heirs of heaven! What an invaluable hope it is for any sinner to entertain, that the eternity of God secures to him an eternity of bliss like that of God! What a rescue has that soul experienced, which, “passing from death to life,” is secure from all evil and admitted to the possession of all good! How blest are they, who, having been exposed to the just wrath and curse of the Almighty, are taken into His favour for ever and for ever! How blest are the people of God in both worlds!—throughout those innumerable ages upon which we soon shall enter, and even here in this brief journey which we have yet to take on earth!

And all this—all this blessedness, this unspeakable deliverance from wrath—given so freely!—to those who neither have had any merit, nor can acquire it!—offered “without money and without price” to those who come to have it! What infinite mercy in God, to grant these vast and soul-satisfying joys to those, who have done nothing by which they could in the least deserve them, and could not by any actions of their own secure them! A salvation, bought by the blood of God incarnate; a salvation, secured and accomplished by the power of the Almighty Spirit; a salvation, foreseen through all eternity, and accomplished at the fitting moment by the infinite wisdom and infinite power of God. This is that great salvation, which is presented to all who are “in Christ Jesus.” And this all in this church to-day are invited to receive;

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”

There is not one among us, to whom God does not address this message. And it is a deeply affecting thought, when we consider what we are and what we deserve, that God has removed every obstacle to the salvation of every one who hears the Gospel, except *his own will*. There is nothing to hinder one among us being saved, but *his own* resolution *not* to be. When we think what we are and what we deserve, how vast does the mercy of God appear! Dwell only on this truth—That God has removed every other hindrance to the salvation He presents. God has made an ample and perfect provision for the present and everlasting welfare of each one of His enemies in this congregation; so that there is nothing between us and everlasting glory, nothing between the present condition of the greatest sinner in this congregation and the everlasting happiness of that person—*but his own will!*

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”

The words themselves ought to be sufficient to assure each person who hears them, that this is the blessed truth; a truth which has come into being through the death of Christ, through the Divine compassion of the Almighty. But, my brethren, as a truth so great was certain not to be left to one single assurance of God's Word—as it was certain to be often repeated, that none might overlook and that none might mistake it—let us therefore on this occasion recal some of those other plain expressions, which God Almighty has been pleased to employ in His Word, to show that this truth, extraordinary as it is, is a truth still—that it is not too good to be

believed—that every rebellious sinner, every enemy of God and his own soul, every bond-slave of sin and Satan, is in fact invited by the Almighty Sovereign to come and be happy in Christ.

Let us recal first those words of the Lord Jesus Christ, which He addressed to His disciples when about to ascend to His glory; “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*.” None was to be overlooked. All were to have that message of Divine mercy addressed to them. And this, in order that “he that believeth” might “be saved.” If any would welcome that message and only credit the astonishing love of God, that soul “should be saved.”

Remember, again, what our Lord has said to us in the parable of the wedding feast, when he declares that upon the proud rejecting the message of mercy the servants of the monarch were thus directed; “Go ye into the highways, and as many as ye shall find bid to the marriage.” Or, all who are destitute and miserable and unhappy and hungry—bid them all to the marriage. There is not one who has only this qualification for eternal happiness, that he is a lost sinner, that he is ruined and destitute, and that he knows his ruin—who is shut out from that invitation.

Let us recal, again, those words of our Saviour in the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew—“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” There is no qualification, except to be weary of trouble and of sin and to feel a wish to be at peace, and then (urged on by that great necessity) to seek that peace in Christ. “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.”

Let us think, again, of those words of our Redeemer, which He addressed to the woman of Samaria, and which are in the fourth chapter of St. John’s Gospel. When she, thinking only of earthly things, and knowing little either of the glory of the Person who spoke to her or of the greatness of the mercy He could show, desired only that her daily labours might be lessened, by receiving a plentiful supply from that natu-

ral spring by which she was standing, He said to her—“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water.” Had she (that is) but known the real glory of the Saviour, and been aware of the value of Divine grace which He could bestow, then she would have asked Him for that grace, and He never would have refused her prayer. Had she sought it at His hands, she would have found it. “Thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.” When therefore any one has by any means discovered the glory of the Redeemer, and knows the value of the gift of Divine grace, and “asks it” at His hands, He never casts out that prayer.

Let us recal, again, the words of our Saviour in the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. John; “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” If he only desires to have salvation through the grace of the Redeemer, “let him come” and ask of Him that he may be saved through grace, and then “let him drink.” He shall not be rejected; he will not ask in vain; he will not go away with parched and thirsty lips from that abundant source; “Let him come and drink.”

And then, lastly, let us think of those words, upon which I addressed you not long since; “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” The gift is free as the air we breathe, and the light that beams upon us. It is offered to—“whosoever will.” If a person does but heartily desire that blessing, that blessing is his.

Now are not these words of God made so plain, that we should think no one could doubt their meaning, or refuse most gratefully to apply them to his own case! In these passages we see most distinctly, that if any person does heartily give himself up to the Redeemer, give himself into the hands of the Redeemer to be saved by His power and love, that person is welcomed by the Lord Jesus Christ and saved. We see, further, in these passages, that every

sinner in the earth, who has the opportunity of listening to this message, is asked to do so. God has made it as plain as language can make it, that every one is invited thus to give himself up into the hands of the Redeemer, to be saved by His power and love for ever. It is made His absolute duty so to do. We are told that He will be condemned for that very fact, if He does not; He will be condemned for that sin, if He does not. We are told that "this is the will of God" respecting each, that he should hear and see and believe; and if he believes, he will be blessed. And when further we think what God has done to make this salvation possible, then we see new illustrations of this truth recorded in His Word. Then we see that God appears to be most glorious, when the worst sinners are saved thus. Then we see, that it is by the salvation of the very worst that the magnitude of the Saviour's merits and the power of the grace of God are most abundantly displayed. Then we see that the mercy of Jesus Christ must take the greatest delight in bringing to the highest glory those who were on the verge of the greatest misery. And there is no consideration that the subject can present to our minds, which does not in one way or another serve to illustrate this truth—That every sinner who hears the Gospel is at liberty to come and take of its blessings. Ho, *every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.*" If a person is only like the traveller in the desert, dying of thirst, *that is qualification enough to receive this mercy.* Ho, you that are weary, you that are dying of thirst, "come ye to the waters." Just as in that beautiful type of the Redeemer which was made in the wilderness, when the stricken rock sent forth its life-giving stream, every Israelite was welcome to drink, "without money and without price," and as the abundant flood poured forth over the wilderness to satisfy them all and to leave abundance, just so are the mercy of God and the merit of the Redeemer so great, that all the sinners of the earth might drink there and live, and there would be abundance left. "*Ho, EVERY ONE that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.*"

These words, then, are addressed to every soul in this assembly; and especially to every one here, who as yet has never "tasted that the Lord is gracious." You are invited now, before you die, before that deadly thirst is past remedy, to give yourselves up into the hands of Jesus Christ, to be saved by His power and love; withdrawing all opposition, placing yourselves passively in His hands—disposed (rather I should say) to concur with all He does, taking His will for yours, and looking for everlasting life, perfect bliss, and perfect goodness, from His merit, His mercy and His grace.

Now, my friends, will you listen to that invitation, that God gives you? Will the unconverted part of this congregation now listen to God's message? Will they at once give themselves into the hands of Christ to be saved?

Alas! Satan is so busy with the human heart, and the heart of man is so ready to invent (strange as it may seem) obstacles to his own eternal happiness, that perhaps while I speak to you there are various objections arising in your mind, to hinder you personally, my dear hearer that art yet out of Christ, from accepting this offer of Divine love. God says to you, Come to the waters and drink; and you find strong objections why you should not.

I will not speak now of the prevailing worldliness of many hearts, which will "make light" of the Gospel to their ruin. I will not speak of that steady scepticism, that rejects all evidence, and will doubt on till the light of eternity flashes on the mind when it is too late. I will not speak of that determined ungodliness, that will cling to paths of sin, though there is the vengeance of the Almighty Monarch of the universe threatening them for it. But those who know that there is this great salvation provided for sinners, those who quite believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is able and willing to save souls from death, those who see that it is a "great salvation" and that the blessedness of God's people even now is enough to make every one wish to be a Christian—even such can

still multiply objections to their own acceptance of this way of salvation.

It is not uncommon for persons, when thus invited, and convinced of sin, against all that God says in His Word to think that they are so unworthy that they cannot be pardoned and blessed. The mercy of God is so far above the mercy that man shows, and their belief is so small that they cannot credit it; they cannot think that God has removed all the obstacles to *their* happiness, and they question whether He can ever receive *them*. They are too great sinners, they think, to be pardoned. They cannot suppose, that God will have mercy at once, and give a free and full forgiveness to such as they are. But if there are those here who entertain that thought (a thought exceedingly common when persons are convinced of sin), let me tell you, my dear hearers, that you are doing the greatest dishonour to God in cherishing the thought. It is not humility; it is limiting the mercy of God, it is refusing to credit His plainest declarations, it is in fact supposing Him to be untrue, it is disbelieving all that He has Himself repeatedly said to you. He has told you, you are *not* too unworthy; He has assured you, that *no* sinner is too unworthy; "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men;" "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." And therefore when any soul does welcome the Redeemer, there is no guilt, no conceivable guilt, that can hinder that soul being saved. And if you recollect that the Lord Jesus adds, "Except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven"—remember that the very essence of that sin is a hard and unrelenting apostacy; it is a blaspheming of God in bitter malice, which forbids the supposition of penitence, and therefore cannot in the least apply to any conceivable degree of past guilt in one who is penitent. If you *do* welcome that "great salvation," if you do love the thought of being saved by Christ, if God has made you humble and contrite and led you to look up to Him with sorrowing hearts to be saved by His grace and power, then be assured that there is no conceivable degree of

guilt, that shall oppose one moment's obstacle to your being welcomed into the family of God. Christ has borne your penalty; Christ has obeyed the law in your stead; Christ has magnified the attributes and government of His Father; it is for Christ's sake—not your own—you are to be welcomed. His merit is enough to cover the greatest degree of sin, and to secure the welcome of the greatest offender that repents. Were it not so, why has He told us of the prodigal being gladly welcomed back to his father's house? Why has He assured us of the conversion of the apostle Paul for this very purpose, that he might be "a pattern" of the mercy of God to future ages? why has He given invitations to the worst so multiplied? Be assured therefore, my dear hearers, that if you think that your sins are too great to be forgiven and that God will not have mercy upon such as you, although I trust that cloud upon your minds will not last long (it is often swept away by the clear shining of the grace of God), yet while it lasts you are doing dishonour to the mercy of the infinite God, and it were well for you, and honourable for Him, if it were removed at once.

But perhaps you may say, you fear it is in vain for you to seek to be saved by Christ unless you are predestinated. You may think, that none will come to glory but those whom God has predestinated from all eternity; and therefore if you are not predestinated, where is the use of all the efforts you may make? Now, first, let me assure you, that whatever there is in the predestination of the Almighty to eternal life, there is no one who welcomes the Lord Jesus Christ to his heart, who can be then numbered amongst the reprobate. God is true to His Word; and none who through His mercy are led to humble penitence and really to receive the Lord Jesus Christ, need be perplexed as to His decrees of predestination. They have in that very act the mark of being His children. If any are not predestinated to eternal life, remember it is only those who are hard and proud and unholy and impenitent and unbelieving and resolved enemies of God. They, indeed, who live and die in the exercise

and in the love of dispositions like these, will show too plainly that they were not predestinated. But if any soul is made humble and contrite, and receives the Lord Jesus as a Saviour whom he longs for, then that soul is numbered amongst God's predestinated people. It should not therefore oppose one moment's uneasiness to those who are conscious that they do "thirst," and that they do "come to the waters" and "drink," and that they have welcomed His invitation to "come to Him" that they may find rest. And let me, in the next place, assure you, that the predestination of an infinite Being includes in it (and does not exclude) all the actings of every mind throughout its whole existence. It does not force any mind, but it includes all its actions. No person is in the least constrained, by anything that there is in the decrees of God, to do evil, to think evil, to wish evil. No one receives the slightest impediment, from any decree of God, to any action that is right or any emotion of mind which is right; for "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." And they, who so conceive of the predestination of God as though it secured the eternal misery of a man whatever that man's dispositions, altogether limit and mistake its character. It has foreseen those dispositions; it has included them all. It lays a constraint on none; and every man is just as free to act, as he would be if there were no such truth as predestination. And this I may illustrate by any of the ordinary works of God in nature. Remember that the predestination of a soul to life is precisely of the same character, as the predestination of every common act; the infinite God must foresee all things, and therefore must predetermine all; down to the very commonest act in any day, down to the most insignificant movement of the most insignificant creature, all is alike predestinated. The Almighty God must foresee all His works; "Known unto God are all His works, from the creation of the world." But how does this limit and fetter the ordinary actings of men? It has made provision for them all; it has involved

them all; it has proceeded on the consideration of them all. It has entirely and fixedly predestinated, whether any field should yield its harvest; but if the husbandman sows he will reap, and if he sows not he will not reap, and there is nothing in that decree of the Almighty to hinder him sowing and reaping if he will, or to force him to abstain from sowing and refuse him the harvest. It is absolutely determined, when a man shall be sick and when recover; but it is equally certain that he who does not use the appropriate medicine will not live, and that under suitable circumstances the medicine that God has given in nature for the relief of pain will relieve it. It is absolutely decreed when and how a man shall live or die; but it is quite certain that if a man refuses to eat food he will not live, and it is certain that when he is in ordinary health to eat food will sustain life; and he is at liberty to eat or not to eat as he pleases, and the predestination of the Almighty does not interfere with the free will of that action, but it has involved it; He has foreseen it all. And it is just so, with respect to every spiritual act, and with respect to the whole salvation of each sinner; who, if he *will not* come to God, dies—and if he *will* come to God, lives; who, if his heart is drawn to receive the incomparable mercy God has manifested in the Gospel, tastes it—and if his heart rejects that incomparable mercy in impenitent hardness, loses it. There is nothing in the predestination of the Almighty, to lay the slightest constraint upon the will of any individual whatever. And thus you see, that he who hears the message of Divine love ought to welcome that message at once, and never perplex himself with any supposed consequences to be derived from the predestination of the Almighty. I say, *supposed*; because I am perfectly convinced, that the full understanding of that question would remove those perplexities, and that it is only because he takes a partial view of them that he would be in the least perplexed in seeking and in finding mercy from God.

But another here perhaps may say—'It is true, that if I had the heart to receive

the Gospel of Christ, and if I did so feel my sin and misery that I welcomed the Saviour and loved His ways and gave myself into his hands, there is nothing in the decrees of the Almighty that should hinder me from obtaining the blessing; but then I cannot change my own heart. I feel it hard and dead and ungodly, and I know not how to change it; and unless He give His grace, I can do nothing.' Now let me say to you, my dear hearer—(though I shall have more to say on that subject this evening)—that God has said to you, "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" You may say that you cannot give yourselves a new heart; but it is plain from this command of God, that you can do *something* to secure it. Christ has said to you too, "Enter ye in at the strait gate;" and though you say, 'I cannot repent,' it is plain from Christ's command that you can do something to secure that state of heart. When Simon Magus was declared of the apostle to be "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," to have "neither part nor lot in the matter" of Christ's salvation, because he thought that the Holy Spirit could be bought by money, that apostle yet said to him—"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee;" it is plain therefore, that if you are as much in bitter enmity to God as he was, and held as fast by the chains of sin as he, still you can do *something* in order to secure repentance and in order to pray successfully. You remember too, that the Lord has said in this very chapter from which our text is taken—"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy on him;" it is therefore plain, that you can do *something* in order that you may "return to the Lord." For where would be the force and where the mercy of these commands, if you could do nothing? It would be mocking your impotence; and God has not so treated perishing sinners in

His Word. I know you cannot change your hearts, I know you cannot repent and love God alone; but is there nothing you *can* do? You can, like Ahab, "humble yourselves before God" for your sins; and you remember, that, all unchanged in heart as he was and though he lived and died the enemy of God, yet do you read, that when he "rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh and fasted and lay in sackcloth and went softly," "the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days." Therefore there was some blessing attached to the outward humiliation, and the fear of heart, with which that wicked monarch abased himself before God. You can humble yourselves like him. You can do as Daniel advised king Nebuchadnezzar—you can "break off your sins by righteousness:" cutting off all those habits by which you know that you break the law of God externally. You can listen to His command in the first chapter of the prophet Isaiah—"Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." You can substitute good habits for evil ones. You can do many of those things which you find in the law of God, which you have hitherto neglected to do. You can do more than this. Our Saviour, in the parable of the talents in the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew, declares that this will be said to the unprofitable servant when he stands before his Lord and Judge—"Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury;" you ought (that is) to have employed your faculties to serve me. That, my dear hearers, you can do; you can serve Christ, you can determine to live the rest of your days to honour Christ. I do not mean, that your *heart* may respond to that intent; but you can form your habits to it; you can determine, that henceforth, what-

ever may be the issue, you will externally try to honour Christ; in all your habits, in your family, in your associations, in all your intercourse with the world and with the church, you can take the Word of God as your rule, and determine to act accordingly. You can, further, cry to God for mercy, as Simon Magus was exhorted to do; and though there may be every thing that is defective in those prayers, still that cry for mercy may be heard. All this it is plain you may do; and till it is all done in vain, till you have persevered to do it all in vain, till you have listened to all such exhortations and welcomed and acted upon them and still found that you are rejected, do not talk of its being impossible for you to change your hearts. Is there not a lurking carelessness underneath that objection? Is it not because you still shrink from the sacrifices the Gospel demands, that you make that objection? Oh! my friends, see whether God is not more merciful than your objections suppose. While you are thus setting yourselves in a way that is good (as you know that you can do), see whether His love will not, like the father in the parable, meet you a great way off. While there is nothing good in all you do, nothing godly in all you feel, see, while thus honouring the greatness and majesty and holiness and goodness of God (as you know you can), whether the love of God will not meet you in your low condition and bring you to peace in Christ.

But perhaps there may be another objection—one which often rises in the hearts of persons when first convinced of sin. They see that these invitations are made to sinners, and it is not the amount of their sin that makes them dread they shall not be blessed; but they feel, that the invitation is to the thirsty and they think they do not thirst—and it is made to the willing and they fear that they are not willing. They imagine that they have not the measure of penitence that is required; and though they do not think that penitence can ever merit mercy, they think that a certain measure of sorrow for sin is necessary before they can obtain mercy. Now let me

beg you, my dear friends, (if there are any present who are harassed by this imagination), to bear in mind, that although the amount of sorrow for sin which a believer can ever feel can never be adequate, and although there is a provision in the Gospel for the growth of contrition, as there is of every other Christian grace, although we ought to feel our sins more and more deeply in proportion as clearer views of the Gospel open on us and we have a juster experience of our vileness and the goodness of God, yet remember that *this* is the measure of penitence which is asked of you—that that makes you willing to welcome Christ. All the rest will come after. Can you, I ask again, give yourself up to Christ to save you by His grace and power? Then that is penitence enough. If you see your ruin and wish to be saved through Him, and ask God for His mercy through Christ, then that mercy is yours. The only obstacle to the salvation of any soul here, old or young, is that he will not welcome Christ. And if after this any should perish because they cling to hardness of heart and love sin better than they love salvation, I assure you, my dear hearers, that the Lord Jesus Christ will say to you, just as He said to the worst and most wicked of the Pharisees that were around Him—“Ye *will not* come unto Me that ye might have life.”

And there is *nothing else* between you and His love than that; as there was nothing between them and salvation through His grace but that. He said to them, that “they would not” come; and He says to every one, who still lives and dies in impenitent obduracy—“You *will not* come unto Me that you might have life.”

Now I do not use this truth, as it is sometimes used (as I think most improperly) to show the impenitent sinner that he will have no excuse at the last day—to reduce him to utter silence when he stands before his Judge; though assuredly it will do that. But it was not needed to accomplish that; the sinner would have been reduced to silence, if there had not been one invitation in God’s Word; the sinner would have been entirely silent before his Judge if the

Lord Jesus Christ had never died. Do not think that the death upon the cross was an act of justice ; it was an act of unbounded and Divine love, and it was not wanted to make a sinful world silent before its Judge ; men will be silent when they stand before Him. But the use I make of it is this—that if you do not thus give your hearts to Christ and will not take Him for your Lord and Saviour, you will feel when at last you stand before Him (and He may perhaps make that thought penetrate your inmost soul)—‘ You *would not* come ; you *know* you would not.’ Then you will feel, my dear bearer, a bitterness of regret, which neither your nor I can anticipate now. To think that there literally was nothing between you and the boundless and eternal happiness of the disciples and children of God but this—that *you did not wish* to be happy, *you did not wish* to be saved, *you did not wish* to be Christ’s disciple !

Do not say, you earnestly wish it. You wish for something else. If you wished it, it would have been yours. If you had but a hearty desire to be Christ’s disciple and a child of God, you would be so. You

may wish for many other things, but you never wished for this. So that Christ may still say—“ Ye *would not* come unto Me, that ye might have life.” For His Word is true ; and He has said, “ If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him !” And though you may have asked it hundreds of times in words—had you once asked it in reality—had you once sincerely wished to be a godly, loving, devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ—God was ready to give you that infinite and eternal good.

Oh ! that you would believe ! Oh ! that you would see where every difficulty lies ! It does not lie in any thing God has done. It does not lie in any thing He is unwilling to do. It only lies in [your own will. And if that is still perverse and irreclaimable, oh ! go and humble yourselves before God, and ask Him by earnest prayer that even that last obstacle may be cleared away (as in so many happy instances He does clear it away), that you may thus receive and find in Him eternal peace.

SERMON XXI.

THE AWAKENED AND CONVINCED, BUT AS YET UNCONVERTED, COUNSELLED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 10, 1839.

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them."—Ezekiel xxxvi. 26, 27.

THE universal plague of our fallen nature is to have a "stony heart;" that is, a heart which cannot properly feel any spiritual truth, which can neither fear nor desire nor hope nor love as it ought, which can neither feel sin nor mercy, and neither fear God nor love Him. But there are various degrees of hardness visible among men, as amongst the rocks of nature there are different kinds, manifesting different degrees of hardness.

There are some persons, who seem totally incapable of all feeling, of almost all sensation, sensation on religious subjects. These are persons, who utterly despise all the threatenings of God—utterly scorn all His invitations; these are persons without remorse, who "glory in their shame," who feel the greatest enmity against the whole system of revealed truth, who live in the habitual violation of the laws of God with the utmost effrontery, who cannot be ashamed. Undoubtedly those unhappy persons are in a melancholy state. The time will come, perhaps not before long, when they will feel that it was an awful thing to set themselves thus against their Maker.

But there are others, who have a "stony heart," and yet are in a very different condition from this. Perhaps I may this evening be addressing some in this congregation, who have been entirely convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and who have acknowledged fully its main doctrines; they may feel convinced that it is necessary to be the disciples of Christ, and know that they must themselves be "born again;" they may feel quite sure, that to be a child of God would be to them a vast and immediate addition to their happiness; and they

may know that eternity is so awful, and the interests that lie beyond the grave are so vast, that they ought to be secured, and that it is a fearful thing to live day by day under the present wrath of God and exposed to His final curse; and under these impressions they feel often extremely vexed with themselves that they do not turn to God; and yet at the same time they may know that their hearts are hard. It is possible they may feel that *they cannot* turn to God. The invitations and promises, which abound in His Word, are made for those who believe; but they feel that they cannot believe. They are made for those, who repent; and they feel that they cannot repent. These invitations and promises are made for those who love God, and such must be blessed they know; but they cannot love God. God has declared that He will assuredly bless those, who serve Him and do His will; but they cannot serve Him and do His will. And though they are aware that the guilt of remaining thus unbelieving, thus impenitent, thus alienated, and thus disobedient, is all their own, yet they continue so still; and when they are exhorted to accomplish the great change, they feel that they are called to that which is impracticable. They have no heart for the change. How should they accomplish it? They feel that they are utterly helpless.

Now, my brethren, this state of mind is a very usual step in the process by which the sinner is brought to God; but at the same time, it is a very dangerous crisis in a person's religious history. It *may* lead to despondency and alienation; it *may* lead to Christ. Sometimes persons in such a state

feel, that as they cannot love God and serve Him, they should therefore dread Him; and because they dread Him, they incur a new measure of guilt, and then, that additional guilt causing them to fear Him more, to escape such an awful state they may perhaps seek the distractions of worldly business and worldly pleasures, and never seek God any more. Oftener, however, I believe it has much happier results. While the Almighty is giving daily proofs of their helplessness and is deepening their humiliation, He at the same time is preparing them for that great work, which they cannot accomplish, but which He can.

He might assuredly have left sinners to themselves; and we should have been bound to adore His unbounded goodness for ever. If He had only given us a Saviour, provided redemption for us, furnished us with that revelation which should both point out to us the Lord of mercy and show us the Lord of glory—had He only pursued us thus with mercies, besieged our hearts and consciences and understandings with every motive that can be addressed to reasonable men, nay, besought us in His Word to turn to Him and live—had He dealt with us thus, we should have been bound to bless and adore Him to all eternity; even if we had resisted all those motives and triumphed over all those inducements, still we should have been bound to bless and to adore Him for His goodness for ever and ever. But “His ways are not as our ways, and His thoughts are not as our thoughts.” “As high as heaven is above the earth, so great is His mercy” towards wretched, sinful men. And therefore, when He saw that all the vast apparatus of Divine mercy would fail to convince the obdurate heart of man, He prepared another and final blessing. He said, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them.” We must have this “stony heart” removed; we must have “a new heart;” we must

“walk in His statutes and keep His judgments;” we shall be miserable for ever, if we do not. But utterly unable to accomplish this work of ourselves, we should have perished in our sins, had not God given us this most encouraging promise, in which He tells us that he will do it all.

It is He, then, who imparts the first principles of spiritual life; it is He, who draws the unbelieving heart to Christ; it is He, who by a sight of Christ breaks down the obduracy of the heart and melts it into contrition; it is He, who at last teaches the revolted sinner to love Him; it is He, who through that new-formed gratitude makes the sinner pay Him an affectionate, willing, and growing obedience. All this is His work. The words of our text give us an undoubted assurance, that this whole change of heart and life is accomplished by the power of God. It is when He “puts His Spirit” within a sinner, that then the “new heart” is bestowed, the “stony heart” is changed into “a heart of flesh,” and he who once disobeyed God “walks in His statutes and keeps His judgments and does them.”

Let us observe the different steps in this great work, which is accomplished by the Almighty Himself.

It is He, as we are assured in this passage, that must altogether, from first to last, renew the nature. He must impart spiritual life to him who had it not. “You,” we read in the epistle to the Ephesians—“You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins” And those words in italics are rightly introduced—“You hath He quickened;” for in the original sentence those words in the fifth verse belong to the first no less than the fifth, and leaving out the words that are parenthetical the sentence would run thus—“You who were dead in trespasses and sins hath He quickened together with Christ.” Therefore the statement in the first verse is this—“You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Originally unconverted man, by whatever excellencies distinguished, is truly “dead in sin.” He may be moral, but he is totally ungodly; he may have many amiable dispositions,

but he has no love to God. Rightly viewed, every one of the feelings which the thought of the Creator raises in his mind is not only inadequate, but totally wrong. He has therefore no spiritual life. And that life is as entirely a new creation, as when the power of God placed our first father in the bowers of Eden. It is altogether His work. "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth." The Word of truth is the instrument that He employs for this change; but it is the grace of the Spirit that accomplishes it. He draws and makes a person to read, to think, to compare, to inquire, to meditate; and by that Word, and not without it, does He effect the change; but it is not the Word which effects it—it is Himself, "Of His own will begat He us by the Word of truth." He gave the first principles of spiritual life to those, whom by His merciful providence He drew to attend to the truth as it is revealed in His Word. When He thus imparts a new principle through the influence of Divine truth rendered effectual by grace, then He draws the soul to Christ. Our Lord said to the unbelieving Jews who were around Him (accounting for the fact that they would not believe in Him), "Whosoever hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Me." God must be the teacher of those, whose hearts are hardened, and whose understandings are blinded by sin. It is not the Book of God alone, which can do it; for this Book was in the hand of the Jew, of the unbelieving Jew no less than the believing, but whilst the one refused to receive Christ, the other came to Him, and the difference between them was, that the one had "heard and learned of the Father" and the other had not. He, then, it is, who instructs the soul; and while a person is reading, comparing and meditating upon His Word—on the narrative of redemption, on the work of Christ, on those perfections which He has manifested in that work—God is pleased to communicate to his inquiring and thoughtful mind new views of Christ, and he sees in Him a glory and a goodness that he never saw before. He perceives how admirably suited to man's

state this way of salvation is; he sees something of the grace of the Redeemer in inviting sinners to partake of this great salvation; he is taught his own ruin! he sees how helpless he is without Christ; fixing his eye on Christ, he obtains a clearer view of his own meanness and weakness, which contrast with the glory of the Redeemer; or rather he perceives how able and how willing Christ is to save the most feeble and the most unworthy, and he places himself gratefully under His care. This is the greatest act that ever takes place in the history of an intelligent and accountable being. It is one, which changes the character of his whole destiny through eternity; it is one, by which he "passes from death to life" and "from the power of Satan to God," by which the bond-slave of Satan becomes the child of God and the heir of heaven. He is enabled now, considering the work of Christ, as represented in the Gospel, (as I stated this morning to give himself up with all his heart and soul into the hands of the living and mighty Saviour, to be saved by His power, grace, and love, according to His own will; withdrawing all opposition, feeling his own helplessness and need, but glad to be saved by grace, his heart according with the way of salvation, liking it, approving of it in every part, giving himself up to be saved just as his Maker and Redeemer will. And when thus (according to the expressive language of the apostle Paul) he is able to "give himself to God," or (according to the equally expressive language of St. James) is able to "submit himself to God," then is he become a disciple of Christ for eternity; and all those fruits of righteousness, which appear in the real Christian, begin from thenceforward to appear in him. He is a "new creature;" and if the work at first appear incomplete, every grace matures, all his spiritual views become by degrees more clear, and he is prepared by the Spirit of God for a glorious eternity.

The first thing that the infinite God accomplishes in such a person, when thus changed is to give him a genuine and real

contrition for sin. His promise to His people was, as you will find in the 12th chapter of the prophet Zechariah, "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son." Before he was enabled to believe, he felt that he could not mourn for sin. He could see it; he could own that he was righteously condemned for it; he could dread the terrific punishment that awaited him; he could shrink from that almighty and all-just Avenger, who threatened him; but he could not mourn for sin. But now God accomplishes this promise; he "looks upon" the Saviour, "whom he had pierced" and he "mourns," and he is in bitterness, and he feels grieved at heart to think how he has offended such a Redeemer, how he has resisted and rejected Him for long years. He mourns to think of the unaccountable folly, the base ingratitude, and the deep corruption, of which he has been obviously guilty; he mourns to think how it was his sin that drove the nails into the Redeemer's hands, and how it was his guilt that brought Him down from a crown in glory to the cross at Golgotha; and he mourns as one that is in bitterness for an only son. God has accomplished that next step in the change of his heart, and the "stony heart" has become a "heart of flesh." It could not mourn for sin once any more than the dead rock; now—now—it is in bitterness and contrition for all his offences.

Before this change he felt also that he could not love God. He knew that it was reasonable that He should love Him. There were innumerable obligations laid upon him. There was a redemption, which was without a name, without a parallel. He deserved all the wrath that an infinite Maker could inflict upon him, because he did not love God. He saw that it was a strange depravity, and it made him perhaps tremble; but with all this he *could not* love God. The "carnal mind was enmity;" and he could not change it. But God had promised in

His Word to His people—"Thou shalt call me My Father, and shall not turn away from Me;" and this promise He now accomplishes. That poor and perishing soul, when it has learned the goodness of God in giving him a Redeemer, and had a new proof of the Divine goodness in changing his stubborn heart, cannot help loving God. And when such a person thinks in his private meditations how gracious God has been, how patient for many years, with what Divine bounty He has loaded him with good, and how He has blessed him when he never was thankful, how He has sought him when he proudly and wickedly turned away, how, lastly, (not because he was humble and grateful and good, but in the midst of his wickedness and rebellion,) He has drawn him to Christ, turned that wicked heart and placed him amongst His children—how, after all this, can he help saying with the apostle, "We love Him because he first loved us?" How can he help feeling the goodness of his gracious God? how can he help desiring, from henceforth, that all the remnant of a hitherto wasted life may be employed in glorifying and in adoring Him who has been so gracious?

And, lastly, he felt once that he could not serve God. He might, indeed, compel himself to many reluctant services; he might, because he dreaded to be punished for the contrary, bring himself to all the external habits of religion, and even become so scrupulously careful in the discharge of religious duties, that the world might mock him for being "righteous over much." Yet he felt in his own soul, that he could not serve God. To yield up his will to the will of God—to take the will of God in all things as his—to give his life and being away to the Almighty—to be a consecrated creature, henceforth to do whatever his Maker would have him to do—he felt that he could not so much as purpose it; not only could not keep his resolution, but could not even resolve it. He had no heart for it. He might sometimes wish perhaps that he could resolve it; but he could go no further; as to

anything like a purpose thus to give himself up into the hands of God, I appeal to any person here that is truly pious, whether before he received the grace of God he felt it to be thoroughly possible for him to do so. But God has said, "I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them." He has said to His people, "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." And this has He now accomplished. He has done it for each living member in the Church of Christ; and He does it for each sinner, who is added to that blessed company. He then, giving them new views of the goodness of the Redeemer, and drawing them to feel towards Him as a child to a father, and "because they are children, sending forth the Spirit into their hearts, whereby they cry, Abba, Father"—therefore, henceforth they are pleased to render to Him all the obedience they can. It is true, that still their entire nature is imperfect, and they often feel, that when they are accomplishing the best results they are far from perfection, and they often sin, and they perceive that their best services come far short of what they ought to render; but still the obedience which they do render, is a grateful and a generous one; it is the wish of even the weakest of those whom God has changed, that they might obey the whole law of God with all their powers through all their being. They would not alter one of God's commandments; they would not wish to be excused from obedience to any the most difficult; they wish in all things to please and serve Him; and if they could be entirely transformed to the example of Christ Jesus—if they could have their will entirely lost in the will of God, so that it should be as much identified with the Divine will (or at least as completely brought into subjection to the Divine will) as that of the Redeemer, and as accordant with it—they would feel it to be the consummation of their joy. And thus the "stony heart" has

become "a heart of flesh." It could not be sorry for sin, and now it is; it could not love God, and now it loves Him; Divine truth was once tasteless and insipid, and it is now the joy and the rejoicing of their souls.

In this way, through all the ages that have elapsed since Christ came, and with respect to the uncounted thousands whom the mercy of God has saved, has He accomplished this most encouraging promise. He has given "a new heart and a new spirit" to each of His people; He has "taken away the stony heart out of their flesh;" He has "put His Spirit within them, and caused them to walk in His statutes," and they have "kept his judgments and done them."

The thought of this truth may well awaken gratitude in the mind of those who have experienced this change, and it may well move to thoughtfulness those who are yet careless. But the principal reason why I have dwelt upon it this evening is, that I might direct the attention of those in this congregation, who are convinced of sin and afraid of the Divine anger, and who have some wishes that they might escape from wrath and that they might secure eternal happiness—that I might show them those inferences, which they in their particular circumstances ought to draw from this most encouraging promise.

And let me first, my dear brethren, beseech you, when you think of this promise, that you would resolve entirely from this moment that if it is at all possible that blessing shall be yours. Others, perhaps, may trifle with it, because unconvinced; but I mean those amongst you, that are in a certain measure convinced of Divine truth, and brought to the conviction that you must be "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," or you must be undone. Will you then this evening resolve, that if it be at all possible by anything you can do, this blessing shall be yours? And while you reflect with sorrow and shame on the fact that your hearts have been up to this hour "stony," will you earnestly resolve that if it be at all possible you will believe in

Jesus Christ—you will obtain contrition for sin—you will be led to affectionate gratitude to God—you will pray to Him that that change of heart (that "new heart," as it is termed here), through which all this shall be accomplished, may be yours? If you are resolving upon any thing in this world, will you resolve upon this? Will you give to this decision all the energy which you can give to any decision? and if you are capable of being in earnest on any subject, will you be so on this? If you have made up your mind with respect to any object in life, will you now resolve that you will use your faculties, that you will employ your strength, that you will give all your energy to this work, until it is accomplished? Will you devote them all to this?—because, knowing as you do, how guilty you are, and in what danger those are whose hearts are unchanged, do you not see that your happiness for time and for eternity is identified with your attaining that change?

In the next place, let me remind you, that the language of our text, and the other passages which I have quoted, show that this whole work is accomplished by God—that it is through His gracious Spirit descending to act upon the human heart that it is turned—and hence that no efforts of your own, unaided, will ever accomplish it. Left to yourselves, you will die helplessly. If you should live twenty years, you would be just as obdurate at the end of that period as you are now; perhaps more so. Left to yourselves, every effort will prove abortive, every hope be disappointed, every confidence be found to be misplaced; and you will only pass from delusion to delusion, till the day of mercy is gone. And therefore you must not, my dear hearers, in the least depend on self. If this work is to be accomplished by God the Spirit, He would have you honour Him by simply depending upon Him. You are not to expect, that if the infinite Spirit condescends thus to deal with the sinner, He will allow the sinner to rob Him of His glory. You must acknowledge His work fully. Unless it is thoroughly wrought

into your minds that God must do it, that God the Spirit alone can change the heart, proudly depending upon self you will repel His operations, and you cannot hope ever to be successful. Let me remind you, that if ever that change is effected by the Almighty, it is effected in His mere mercy. To change our external habits, to manifest diligence in religious services, to do all that I trust you will do from this day—this cannot in the least deserve so great a favour from God; and the least consideration will prove to you—I doubt not in the case of numbers of you has already proved—that there is not the slightest tendency in such efforts to merit, and that you cannot, by all you can do with a view to extricate yourselves from so great a peril, in the slightest degree deserve the converting grace of God. And if, my dear hearers, it is to be wrought by the sovereign mercy of God, by His own mere will and pleasure, by a kindness and compassion to which you have not the least title, then how humbly should you seek it! If you should seek it with any measure of latent pride—if you should seek it with the thought that you have not sinned as others have, and your heart is not so entirely evil as the hearts of others are—if any self-complacent and proud notions of this kind, which are as false as they are proud, should arise and dwell in your minds—it is just like a constant prayer, unheard by others but reaching the ear of the Almighty, beseeching Him not to save you. If you would be saved—saved when you deserve ruin—you must be saved by the mercy of that God who "resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the lowly." "Submit yourselves therefore to God." Own that He has a right to destroy you; own that you have no title to converting grace; own, that if you be left to the last hour of your life in utter hardness and unchangeable wickedness, God would only treat you as you deserve. And then, ask for mercy; ask to be saved of grace; ask that He would make you a monument of His compassion, of His love, and of His power; but never—oh! never—think that you deserve it.

Let me next remind you, my dear friends, that you cannot expect this work to be accomplished without effort. If you should, under any pretence, or even by any mistake, remain in inactivity waiting for some blessed moment when God shall of His sovereign mercy change your hearts, it is most probable that you never will reach heaven. There is in this, that which is contrary to His own express command; there is in it, that which betrays, though you may not avow it to yourselves, a vast indifference to the subject. If you would be saved, you must manifest the earnestness of those, who know the value of salvation; and God would have you make many efforts that you may be saved. Remember that Christ has said to those, who have never yet repented, and never yet believed on Him—"Strive to enter in at the straight gate." The word means "wrestle"—"Wrestle to enter in at the straight gate." Struggle with all your old and cherished sins; struggle with every bad habit; struggle with unbelief; struggle with pride; struggle with the world and with every worldly interest; struggle with the solicitations of unworthy and wicked friends; struggle with every obstacle; wrestle against every enemy; determine that if possible you will "enter in at the straight gate," which so few find and so few enter. This being Christ's express command, if you would ever reach heavenly glory do not neglect it; but from this hour "strive"—using every means you possibly can, in order to bring yourself to thoughtfulness, penitence, belief, love and obedience. I mentioned to you this morning some of those ways in which God has shown to us in His Word, that it is His will that a sinner should seek to be saved, I showed you that it is His will that a sinner should at once humble himself before Him; confess His danger; break off his sins; learn to do well, as well as cease to do evil; begin to live to His glory; employ his talents, his faculties, his property, for God's glory; change his external habits; make his household a religious household; live with godly people; walk with the wise; desert the society of

those that dishonour God; and in various other ways show that he is in earnest, and asking by his actions, no less than by his lips, that God's Spirit may come upon him. And, my brethren, let me remind you, that every child of God has taken these steps, except in a few cases, where by a very sudden work, under peculiar circumstances (as in the case of Zaccheus or the penitent thief or the apostle Paul), the work has been accomplished by the Divine Spirit without any preparatory process. And to this I may add the thought, that very few, perhaps none, ever persevered in these habits without being blessed. Look around you and see whether you ever found one in society, whether you ever met with one, in whose external conduct even you observed the marks of all this diligence and earnestness to be saved, combined with a just view of truth, with a lowly acknowledgment of his ruin, with a wish to believe in Christ that he might escape from ruin—whether you ever saw such an one not blessed? If not—if on the one hand all that are Christians have taken this way, and if on the other hand there are none that you can find who have ever taken it without being blessed—then you must take it, and you have every reason to hope that you will be blessed in taking it. And though you deserve nothing, and cannot merit or have anything but of the Divine goodness, and though it is altogether a preparatory work in which you will be waiting for that great change to be accomplished by the Spirit, through which the heart of stone is made a heart of flesh, yet it is that work in which you may expect to be blessed.

And lastly, if you would succeed in becoming a disciple of Christ through faith, and in having this great change wrought on you by the Spirit of God, then let me beg of you that no obstacle, no disappointment and no delay may hinder you from persevering in this prescribed course. Remember, my dear hearers, you have made the Almighty wait long years for His rightful service, and deprived Him long years of what was justly His due. You ought to have served Him from the earliest dawn of reason in your

minds. From the time when you were little children, your faculties ought to have been consecrated to Him. From the moment that you could understand what He had done for you in nature, in providence, and in grace—from that moment your hearts ought to have been His. How have you abused His patience! how have you scorned His mercy! how have you robbed Him of His right! Now, my brethren, if it should please God to make you pass through a season of humiliation and doubt, if you should not at once be made happy in Christ, I pray you never to allow yourself to cherish hard, unbelieving, and despairing thoughts; but persevere in the course on which you enter. Pray on, strive on, hope on; and never cease to pray, strive, and hope, till you are a happy believer in Christ.

But, after all, what can my solicitations and persuasions avail, what even can the words of Holy Scripture do to convince you, much less to make you persevere?

God must do it. And you, my brethren in Christ, who know the value and power of grace, lift up your hearts to God for those amongst us, in our families, in our schools, in the whole congregation, who are in this interesting but dangerous state; who are convinced, but not converted; who are in a crisis in their history, from which they may plunge down to destruction, or ascend step by step to glory. Pray for them earnestly and often; pray for them with united supplications. The infinite God will hear and answer prayer on behalf of sinners. He will be glorified in their recovery and safety. And if, through your instrumentality, they are brought to peace and joy in believing, if they do not know what an influence intercessory prayer has now, they will hereafter know it; and you will find in heaven, that it is sweet to commune with those, who by your earnest supplications were aided in their way to glory.

SERMON XXII.

THE AWAKENED AND CONVINCED, BUT AS YET UNCONVERTED, COUNSELLED.

PREACHED AT ST JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOV. 24, 1839.

“ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm : for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”—Acts xvi. 27—31.

PAUL and Silas having been sentenced to imprisonment at Philippi for an alleged tumult, this jailer seems to have received willingly the severe order which it was entrusted to him to execute ; and having received the command to keep them safely, “ thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks.” But there were no chains, and there was no dungeon, that could prevent the interposition of Almighty power on their behalf. They felt happy, in the exercise of faith ; and at midnight, in the inner prison, loaded as they were with chains, these servants of Jesus Christ could “ pray and sing praises unto God.” These prayers and praises, bringing down the blessing of God, threw open the doors of their dungeon, broke off their chains, and set them free. But they were not eager to escape ; and though thus at liberty, remained still in the dungeon where they were. At first the jailer was alarmed for the consequences of what would seem his own neglect ; and thinking that all his prisoners had escaped, and that he would have to account before high authorities for that neglect, he was disposed to kill himself, in his terror and dismay. But when he found from the words of St. Paul that all were still there, then the fear of the consequences of the neglect of his office was exchanged for the conviction of sin ; and he “ sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,” as before the injured servants of God ; convinced in his heart that *they were* the servants of God,

feeling deeply his own guilt in the part he had taken in oppressing them, and afraid, not now of punishment from man, but of vengeance from God. And he “ brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?” His character and credit and office were secured ; but his *soul* was in danger. And it was this, which now especially occupied his thoughts.

Like him, when any person is convinced of sin, and aware of his danger as exposed to the just wrath of God, one of the first thoughts, which must occur to such a person, is—“ What must I do to be saved ?” If there be any method by which he can escape the threatened doom, he feels prompted by his anxiety and by his conviction of ruin to take that method. Thus when Saul of Tarsus was met by his Redeemer on his road to Damascus, and struck to the ground by the brightness of the light, and trembled before Him whom he had been persecuting, one of his first feelings and first expressions was—“ Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?”

There may be some in this church who are in this state of mind, in which Saul was when struck to the ground and trembling ; or this jailer, when equally alarmed he sprang in and used these words before the apostles. There may be some here, who are aware that in an unregenerate state each person is exposed to the wrath of God, and who may be convinced that they are themselves unregenerate, and whose earnest inquiry is, “ What must I do to be saved ?”

That inquiry is fully answered in our text. There is but one direction to be given to such; there is but one method they can take; there is but one duty to be accomplished; there is but one hope to be laid hold of. And the answer that the apostle gives, does, in fact, contain all that may be said upon this subject—the only direction that can be given to a trembling sinner; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Whoever does believe, will live; whoever believes not, will perish. And this is the instant duty of all, who are aware of their ruin, and who know that they are exposed to the righteous anger of God—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”

But let us again bear in mind what it is to “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” it is not, to be persuaded that He once existed; it is not, to believe that He is a Divine person; it is not, to be persuaded that he is able and willing to save other souls. All this belief “the devils” may have, and only “tremble” in the thought. But it is to commit ourselves entirely to His care, to place ourselves unreservedly at His disposal, to yield heartily to his method of salvation, to commit ourselves body and spirit to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved by His merit and mediation, His grace and love. When the prophet Elijah saw that celestial chariot, which God Almighty sent to convey him to the unseen world—when he placed himself in it, to be conveyed he knew not whither, by the care and love of God—that was Faith. When the Prophet Jeremiah was cast by king Zedekiah into a subterranean dungeon, where he sunk in the mire and death was approaching, and when the Ethiopian eunuch, Ebedmeleck, asked him to trust his care and kindness and he would draw him from that dreadful pit by the ropes which he let down into his dungeon, when the prophet trusting him and placing the ropes under his arms desired to be raised to life and safety, that was faith. And it is precisely in the same way, that the sinner has to commit himself to the care of Christ. He can never reach heaven unassisted; he has but one Friend, who can carry him thither; it

is the Lord Jesus Christ; and he must commit himself to His care. He is fallen into a worse abyss of ruin, than the prophet experienced; and he has but One, who can pluck him thence; and if he can trust to His grace and care, he can be saved. He who looks for any other method of deliverance, will be disappointed. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope of a sinner. “Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” “In Christ Jesus there is neither barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all” He is the only hope, the only salvation of a lost soul. There is no other method, by which a sinner can approach God here, or by which he can be admitted to His favour hereafter, than the care and mediation of that Saviour, who has made a perfect atonement for our sins. And to believe in Him, is to feel assured of His willingness and power to save us from the power and from the penalty of sin, and to commit ourselves to Him as our Teacher, as our Atonement, and as our Ruler—as Prophet, Priest, and King. This, and this only, is faith. “As many as received Him,” says the apostle John, “to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” To “believe on His name” is, then, to “receive him;” and this receiving Him” in all His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King—looking to Him to be taught and instructed, to be justified, and to be sanctified and governed—this is faith. And the same thing is taught us by our Saviour in those words, which have consoled so many thousands of persons since He uttered them—“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” It is still in the exercise of faith; “it is “coming to” Christ for pardon, “learning of” Him, and “taking His yoke”—in other words, giving ourselves up entirely to Him, to be saved by His grace and love—which is “believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Obedience to this command includes

in it obedience to all the other directions, which are given to sinners in the Word of God. We are there often commanded to "return unto the Lord." And he, who has thus believed in Christ is returned; his enmity is subdued, and he is setting out in a course of holy obedience. We are commanded in the Scriptures, to "make in us a new heart and to renew in us a right spirit." And he, who has thus believed in Jesus Christ, has obtained that new heart and that right spirit. We are commanded in Scripture to "repent and to believe the Gospel." And he, who has believed in Christ, has changed his mind—is no longer seeking his happiness in sin, but has committed himself to the Saviour to seek happiness in Him. We are commanded in Scripture, to "submit ourselves to God;" the sinner is commanded so to do. Sometimes, like the Jews of old, a sinner is too proud to "submit himself to the righteousness of God;" but he, who has believed in Christ has submitted to it. Sometimes the sinner so loves his transgression, that his "carnal mind being enmity against God," he "is not subject to the law of God, nor can be;" but he, who has believed in Christ, has given up his opposition of heart to the law as well as to the Gospel, and has placed himself under the Government of Christ no less than committed himself to His love. Thus all the great duties incumbent on a sinner, to turn at once from the evil of his ways, at once to love his Maker, at once to glorify Him in holy obedience—all these are included in this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

And to the accomplishment of that duty is attached everlasting joy. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." "By Him all that believe are justified from all things." So that if a sinner can thus commit himself entirely to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ to save him, then eternal life is his. On the other hand, the greatest penalties are attached to the neglect of that duty. All are commanded to fulfil it instantly; all are bound to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—to forego

their opposition, to place themselves under His care, to seek salvation in the only way in which a sinner can seek it. And if they refuse to do so, the penalty that rests upon them is fearful. Condemned already for every other transgression, this completes their criminality. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha;" if a man does not see glory and goodness enough in the Son of God to attract his heart and win him to become His disciple, then he must be "anathema maranatha"—an accursed thing when the Saviour comes—all other guilt being lost (as it were) in this, the chief of all, that he had obduracy of heart enough to resist all the Divine love, wisdom, and goodness, shown in the cross. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There is no alternative but this—to believe on Christ and be happy for eternity, to refuse to believe on Christ and to be for ever cast away.

My brethren, let me place this duty fore each one of you. Convinced of sin and aware that you must be disciples of Christ, remember that this is the grand specific that God has originated and provided for your souls—this the one direction that can be given to you how you are to escape eternal wrath—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Saved when? That moment you believe. "All that believe are justified from all things;" "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." And if you did renounce all the rebellion of your hearts, your opposition to God, your resistance to the Holy Ghost—if you did give up that enmity and did commit yourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you—that moment you would "pass from death unto life," from condemnation to salvation, from the wrath of God to the enjoyment of His favour. Do you think, that it is impossible that this should be done at once to one, whose whole life has been rebellion?

Look, then, at the evidence of the Word of God, and see whether it is always long before a sinner can be brought to believe in the Lord Jesus and to rejoice in Him. It was very soon, when Matthew was "sitting at the receipt of custom," a publican amongst the publicans—it was *at once*, that he renounced all his habits of sin, believing in the Lord Jesus Christ; and from the day that he was called, became His faithful follower. It was thus, too, that Zaccheus, who was "the chief among the publicans," and notorious for his sins (as appears from the context)—it was *at once*, that he welcomed the Saviour joyfully; and "that day" said the Lord Jesus Christ to him, "Salvation is come to this house." It was *at once*, that the dying thief laid hold of this "great salvation;" as with his companion in guilt he was reviling and blaspheming the Saviour, his heart was turned and he believed; and to him, him in that hour and on the very verge of ruin, did the Lord Jesus Christ say, "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." It was *at once*, too, that St. Paul, in the very height of his rebellion against God, laid hold of this "great salvation;" when struck to the earth and trembling, there were but three days of terrible conviction and alarm, and then came the message of mercy to him—"Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord;" and from that day he began to preach Christ, and remained to the end of His laborious course His affectionate and devoted disciple. It was in one day, too, that those three thousand at Pentecost heard the message, which St. Peter was commissioned to address to them—felt pricked to their hearts—and convinced of their sin in joining in the persecution of the Lord of glory; and that day they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—that day they believed Jesus Christ and gladly received the Word, and three thousand were added to the church, of whom it afterwards appears, that not merely were they brought to the Lord, but the grace given to them was extraordinary. So that we see in the Scriptures, that instant believing in the Lord Jesus, instant

fleeing to Him, is the course a convinced sinner ought to take, and that it is unreasonable there should be long delay. The moment he sees his ruin, he ought to lay hold upon Christ unreservedly; and if he does commit himself, without any reserve of heart, to the care and grace of that gracious and generous Saviour, that moment his soul will be happy in believing. All that any delay, all that any conceivable means could do to bring a person to repentance and faith is this—To give him a deep insight into his guilt and ruin, to make him see the greatness and the glory of the Saviour, to impress his mind with the great verities of the eternal world, judgment, heaven and hell. And if this is done at any time, the time taken is nothing; it is whether the work is done—whether a person is brought to see his ruin, whether he does understand the Gospel, whether he knows that Jesus Christ is a mighty Saviour, whether he sees that it is necessary to him that he should have eternal life, and knows that there is only one hope, and that hope in Christ. That moment he is to lay hold on the hope; and there ought not to be long delay. Nay, why is there any delay? If there be in this church any among those whom I now address, who know and feel that they are yet ungodly—if they go not from this house believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, why is it? It is because of their own obduracy; it is because they love sin more than they love heaven, because they are determined not to serve God, because they cannot break from the chains of sin. Every moment's delay in giving your hearts up to Christ, and committing yourselves to Him to be saved—it is a moment of rebellion against God, deepening the dye of every sin you have hitherto committed, and asking the Divine wrath to be poured out upon you as a deluge. That moment that you feel you have rebelled against your Saviour, you ought to throw down the weapons of rebellion. That moment that you feel you are exposed to His wrath you should employ all your efforts in passing to a state of His favour. And if He points out the way (and it is by com-

mitting yourselves to the Redeemer to be saved by Him), you ought not for one instant to delay, but immediately to cast yourselves upon His love and care to be forever made happy by His grace.

Oh! that His own Spirit might so act upon the hearts of all here, that each one who is not now His believing disciple, might feel constrained to make that wise choice and to become truly His; and that he would now, even while I speak to you in the name of the Redeemer, now in the solitude of his own soul before the omniscient and gracious Redeemer, say—‘*I am a lost and ruined soul. I have offended my Maker, my heart has been desperately evil, my rebellion has been complete; I feel that I am ruined and helpless, that I have no strength in myself, that if I had a century to live it would be a century of crime, that I cannot turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, that I am a ruined soul and I cannot “turn and live;” and now, Saviour of sinners! in all that helplessness and ruin I ask Thee to stretch out Thine arm and to take me for Thine, and I give myself up to Thy care and grace to save me by Thy sanctifying Spirit and by Thy love and favour for ever and ever.*’ Could you—would you—do thus, then there is One at hand, ready to “save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him;” and “believing in the Lord Jesus Christ,” you would “be saved.”

Yet still I cannot but suppose, that there are many among those that live an ungodly life, who will say, perhaps despondingly, perhaps with other feelings—‘*But I feel that I cannot thus believe, I feel that I cannot thus repent, I cannot submit myself to God, I cannot give myself unreservedly and heartily into the hands of an omnipotent Saviour to rescue me by His grace.*’

Then let me first say to such, that every hour's delay is an hour of guilt; it is an hour of positive renewed rebellion against God. What you say may be true; you may feel an insuperable repugnance to religion; but there is desperate depravity in that. It is a crime before God, for which you cannot answer. And every hour that you

remain in that state of alienation from Christ and indecision respecting committing your soul to Him, is an hour for which, unless grace prevents, you will have a fearful account to render. For you have light; you have every evidence that the subject can require; you know, or ought to know (and might), your ruin; you know that Christ is ready to save; and there is nothing but an incapability of being moved by any goodness, of feeling any gratitude, of loving holiness, of any reverence and regard to your Maker—it is only that, that could keep you from at once “believing in the Lord Jesus Christ” that you might “be saved.”

Yet still I do not think that the Word of God has left even such sinners hopeless. And I wish to make this matter as plain to you as I can.

At this stage in a person's feelings, there are the most opposite kinds of advice given; and by serious persons, and serious ministers too. There are some, who, embracing strictly Calvinistic views, would say to such an one—‘*You cannot change your own heart, God must do it; you are in a state of blindness and enmity and therefore can do nothing; you can do no spiritual act; you must wait till the Lord may (if He please) change your heart, and may (if He please) rescue you from hell; and that is all that you can do.*’ And there is another class of teachers (and they are multiplying, and on the continent of America their numbers are now very great and they are growing every day), who give just the opposite advice; and they say—‘*You are bound to turn to the Lord at once, and you are bound at once to change all your obduracy into love, and all your unbelief into faith; and we can give you no other directions; and if those directions do not save you, you are criminal, and there must be left; and they tell us, that if we advise men to do any thing besides, it is giving them an indulgence in sin; and if we tell them to resort to any means that may (in the use of them) act upon their hearts, it is telling them of means by which they shall do hereafter what they are bound to do now, and it seems like sentencing them*

to hell, because long before they use these other means they may die and may be in hell; and they bid us to remember, that the Scripture does not say, 'Pray for a new heart' (and the sinner *cannot* pray for it), but the Scripture says, "Make you a new heart," and the sinner ought to change his heart at once.

Now I conceive, that both these classes of teachers are opposing the plain words of God. The first class forget the whole number of passages, in which God bids sinners turn to Him and live. And they forget that God acts by means, and that there are means which the sinner must take if he would be blessed of God; and though the change of heart is a work wrought by God, yet it is not a work which the sinner may ever expect to be accomplished, except he uses the appointed and proper means; that God commonly is wont to bless the means, and that He is not wont to bless the disuse of them; and therefore they disregard the customary dealing of the Almighty, as well as the plain language of His Word. And the other class seem to me to forget our whole nature, and not to remember that when there is an evil feeling we cannot change it by merely wishing that it might be changed, and that we must take means whereby it may be changed; that God acts by suitable means, and that it is His will we should take those means of having the dispositions changed which keep us from Him. Let me illustrate my meaning here. Imagine the case of that prodigal son in the parable; imagine him now in the midst of his iniquities, when a wanderer from home, and suppose that the thought of returning to it occurred to him, and invitation came after invitation bidding him to come back to his father's house, and assuring him that he should be welcome and happy there. It was his duty to return at once; unquestionably it was. But imagine he should say in his heart—'I hate my father, I cannot believe he loves me, I cannot believe he is sincere in wishing me well, I cannot endure the habits of his house, I cannot go back;' and if he felt himself miserable, and knew that absolute ruin was approaching, his resources exhausted, his character gone, stil

he might feel that enmity to his parent, that disbelief of his parent's kindness, and that hatred for the habits of his home, compelling him to remain where he was. There is that in his heart, which makes him refuse to go back. Now to feel that repugnance was sin; but it would not be enough to say to him 'It is sin,' but you would point out the means by which it might be overcome. He might break away from his bad companions; he might read again his father's letters; he might remember the happiness of his childhood; he might recall continually fond thoughts of home, tending to reclaim him from that unjust enmity, that unjust reluctance to return; and while thus acting, leaving the habits of vice and forming those of virtue, impressed with the ruin coming upon him, constantly thinking 'How happy and how well it were if I were under my father's roof and enjoying my father's love!'—the moment would come when he would soften, and would say, "I will arise and go to my father." Now I conceive it is just so with the sinner. There are things, which God has in His Word said the sinner may, and should do; and these teachers seem to me to be disregarding such injunctions. Besides which, they are obviously disregarding the principles of our nature. A sinner hates God—unjustly hates Him; a sinner disbelieves—the kindness of God—unjustly disbelieves it; a sinner abhors the habits of piety—unjustly abhors them. He cannot alter that hatred by merely thinking that he ought to do so; but he may present to himself a thousand considerations, tending to convince him of his wickedness, tending to quicken his desire after salvation; and these being the suitable means, though not in themselves capable of effecting the change, are the means which God has prescribed for its being effected. And to justify this statement, I need only refer you to the words of our Lord. Our Lord has not merely said to the sinner, "Enter in at the straight gate"—which would belong to the question of duty; but our Lord has said, "*Strive* to enter in at the straight gate"—because He knew that there was much that a sinner might do, and ought to

do, to direct his mind into that course. Our Lord did not say, 'Receive eternal life; but He said, "Labour, not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto eternal life." "Labour" for it; because He knew that there were many things that a sinner could do, tending to change all those perverse habits which he has hitherto formed and which are hateful in God's sight.

In the first place, it is the direction of the Word of God to sinners, that they ought at once to humble themselves before their Creator. Thus St. James says—to sinners, not to saints—"be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness; humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up." This is the sinner's first duty; to fasten upon his mind the sense of his criminality, to confess it before God, to present all his ingratitude in its true light, to dwell upon it from day to day, not to shrink from the distress that it causes but to seek that distress. It is a necessary medicine for the soul; it is the means by which he shall be brought to feel an earnest wish to be saved. He must thus "humble himself before God." And when a sinner does thus "humble himself before God," remaining a sinner still, with his heart opposed to his Maker and therefore exposed to His righteous anger, yet even in that very state of mind God may be pleased to bless that partial humiliation. For we hear (as I lately mentioned), that when the prophet threatened king Ahab with the wrath of his Maker, "Ahab rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly;" and though Ahab lived and died impenitent, yet impenitent as he was, when he thus publicly humbled himself before his Maker God gave him a blessing upon that partial humiliation; "The word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days."

The next thing that a sinner should do

ought to be to "search the Scriptures," that he may impress his mind with all those awful, encouraging, and animating statements, with which the Word of God abounds. This also sinners are directed in that word to do. In the first place, it is declared to be by the Scriptures, as an instrument, that God changes the heart. "Of His own will," says the apostle James, "begat He us with the Word of truth." If a person, therefore, neglects the Word of truth, and neither hears nor reads it, he has not the slightest reason to expect that his heart will ever be changed. And if he ask, "How may I produce faith in my heart, which is now unbelieving?"—the apostle answers in the tenth chapter of the Romans, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God?" it is by becoming familiar with the Word of God and dwelling on it much, that all the causes and grounds of unbelief are seen more and more to be futile, and a person is drawn at length to believe. When the apostle preached the Gospel to the Jews of Thessalonica, it is said that they would not listen, and only persecuted him for his message; but of the Jews of Berea it is said—"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so; therefore many of them believed." They used the proper means, which our Saviour had already urged the Pharisees around Him to use, when He said "search the Scriptures;" and those means were blessed, and brought them to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so powerful is this instrument, that when we are told, in the parable of the rich man in the sixteenth of St. Luke, that he entreated that one might be sent from the dead to stir up his brethren to repentance, our Lord employed these words in the person of Abraham—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Therefore this blessed book has been given by God to be the means of breaking the heart; and the sinner, instead of neglecting it, ought at once

to read it, seriously, humbly, candidly, with a view to understand all its meaning and impress his heart with it day by day. He should read it much; he should let the impression of one reading remain until another, and seize every moment for it, in order that he may imbue himself with the mind of God contained in His Word.

And then, as a person ought to read and learn with a view to bring his heart to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, so he ought to think, for the same purpose. He ought to meditate on that which he reads and which he learns. The want of which consideration is pointed out, in the first chapter of Isaiah, as the cause why the nation of Israel continued disobedient to God. "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know. My people doth not consider;" they neither considered their ways that they might be affected with their guilt, nor did they consider the mercies and judgments of God that they might be affected suitably with hope and terror. It is charged upon sinners in general, that they should do so. Thus you read in the fiftieth Psalm—"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The consideration of the Divine judgments, and the letting them dwell upon the mind, is eminently calculated to quicken seriousness, and to make a person seek the Lord. So we are exhorted to consider our own conduct, in contrast with the Divine law and the Divine will. You read, for instance, in the prophet Haggai, this direction repeated a second time:—"Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways;" "Thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways." God would have those, who are enemies to Him seriously ponder what they have been doing, look at the folly of their conduct, observe its ingratitude, notice His threatenings, consider what judgments are certainly awaiting them; and these things will solemnize their minds.

In the next place, a sinner ought to speak so as to fasten conviction and seriousness upon his mind. He ought to use the power of language, as well as the power of thought for this purpose. He ought at once to confess "the truth as it is in Jesus;" to acknowledge that to serve God with all the heart is wise and right. He should never be "ashamed of Christ before men," but acknowledge Him at once—acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ has the right to rule over every one's conduct and in every one's house. He ought at once to speak to sinners about the danger of their case. He should be ready to converse with all Christian persons, who know the blessedness and peace and joy of a life of godliness. And thus using this power of language as becomes one who is in earnest to be saved many a salutary impression may be made upon his mind, weakening prejudice and checking the love of sin, from day to day.

In the next place, a person should at once act for eternity and for God. A person must not think, because he can do no spiritual act, that he can do nothing that is useful before he is brought to God; but he should act as he can, and if he has not right motives and his heart is corrupt and he is in imminent danger still, yet he may act in a way that may be constantly having a favourable influence on his own mind. One thing that greatly impedes the progress of religious thoughts and religious habits in a man's mind, is the ungodly society, which he has cherished from his youth up. It becomes, then, a sinner's duty, when he is convinced, to forsake that society, and to seek in Christian companionship that wholesome influence, from which he separates himself when he cultivates wicked associations. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." God has here pointed out a sinner's duty, at once to leave the company of those who are thus offending against God. Another thing that hinders a man from turning to God is, the love of positive sins. Those sins he ought at once to break off. He may not be able to change his heart; but he can change bad

habits, he can break off habits of sin, and thus he is repeatedly charged in the Word of God to do. Thus when Nebuchadnezzar was threatened with the judgments of God, the prophet's exhortation to him was—"Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor;" this was addressed to one who was then an enemy of God, and every other enemy of God, ought to "break off his sins" if he would have the Divine favour. This is what God has often called upon sinners to do. Thus in the first chapter of the prophet Isaiah we read—"Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together saith the Lord: thou hast your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" that is, if these means were taken and thus the soul was brought to God, then at once all his past transgressions would be forgiven and blotted out. And thus, again, our Lord has intimated, in a most instructive expression in the parable of the talents, in the twenty-fifth of St. Matthew, that it is His will that a sinner, continuing still ungodly, should in that state employ his faculties—his power, his money, his time—in every way to glorify Christ. Remember, that Christ is our Master and Lord, not because we are believers, not because we love Him, but because He loved us enough to die for us, because He has made an atonement for sin which demands this return at our hands; and the most ungodly person in this church is the property of Christ, and he has no right to live to himself, but is bound to live according to the will of his Master and Lord. And he should begin at once to do it, whether his heart incline to it or not; he must at once, the moment he knows this, live to glorify Christ and live to serve Him. Thus our Lord declares, that at the last day He will thus speak to every "unprofitable servant"—that is, to every one who has lived in

this world to please himself without regarding the will of his Master and his Saviour—"thou oughtest to have put My money to the exchangers, and then at My coming I should have received Mine own with usury." The ungodly servant, who will be condemned at the last, ought to have employed the faculties, the time, the property he had to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. And in so doing, he might have obtained a blessing.

The last direction I will give to a convinced sinner is, that he should constantly pray that God would change his heart and will. Now this is contrary to the teaching of those that I have described, and it is contrary to the feeling of many a convinced sinner; which is this—"The promises made to prayer are made to believing prayer, and I believe not; and the promises made to prayer are made to him who does not "regard iniquity in his heart;" and I do "regard iniquity in my heart;" and they are made to those who love God, but I hate Him; and therefore having my whole heart opposed to my Maker, I cannot acceptably pray, and there is no use in praying when my heart is so corrupt and my prayers are so entirely founded on self-love that they are themselves but proofs and instances of my ungodliness." Now all this is true—that they are ungodly and that there is nothing meritorious in them, and that the promises made in Scripture are (as is justly said by these convinced sinners) not made to the prayer of him, who is still wilfully opposing his Maker and his Redeemer. But let a man be convinced of sin, aware of his misery, groaning in the anguish of his heart, and wishing to be saved, and such an one is charged in Scripture to pray as he can, if he cannot pray as he ought. It is said of sinners, you remember, in the tenth chapter of the Romans, "Who-soever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" showing that this calling on His name is preliminary to salvation. Sinners are expressly charged to pray. So Simon Magus was thus exhorted by the apostle Peter, in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the apostles—"Repent there-

fore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." And when Saul of Tarsus was convinced, but not yet converted, it instantly prompted him (as conviction prompts every one who is in earnest) at once to seek God in the anguish of his soul; and that was blessed, for when the Redeemer appeared to Ananias, and directed him to go and administer instruction and consolation and finally baptism to the apostle, then he said—"For behold, he prayeth." In that agony of soul, in which during those three days of darkness and solitude he was enduring inward conflict, this was the habit of his mind; and this was what the Redeemer blessed. "Behold, he prayeth." And we have for the encouragement of a convinced sinner, various instances, in which even such prayers have been heard and blessed of God. Recal again that humiliation of Ahab, an ungodly man, whom yet it pleased the Almighty to bless on account of that public humiliation. We read in the book of Genesis, also, that by the Divine appointment Hagar and Ishmael were dismissed from the house of Abraham, and sentenced to live in the desert—the occasion being that Ishmael had been mocking at Isaac; there is no appearance of Ishmael having been at that time at all brought to God, and yet it is said, that when he was in the desert in his misery God heard his cry of distress; the angel of the Lord said to his mother, "Fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad." There is another remarkable instance to the same effect, where the prayer not only brought a present blessing (as in the case of Ishmael), but led to the conversion of the heart. If you look to the second book of Chronicles, the thirty-third chapter, you will find an account of king Manasseh, who surpassed all his predecessors in wickedness—and did this, though he had the benefit of a pious father. For that, the Lord threatened him and his people with immediate vengeance; and some trouble came upon him; and we read—"When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself

greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him; and He was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God." It therefore appears that it was in his unregenerate state that he thus sought God—that his prayers were made when he was in that condition in which we are told men cannot pray; and though his prayers originated in his own dread and a wish to be made happy, yet it pleased the Almighty, when he thus sought Him, to bless those prayers, and (as appears by other passages) he became a true penitent and was a child of God. Now, brethren, is it not plain from these passages, that God is wont to bless the first humiliation of a sinner, and that if any one does in his misery seek His grace and blessing he is heard and blessed of God?

All these means, observe, are no substitute for faith. In that sense there is no value in them. There is nothing in them of the character of true godliness. They are not meant to palliate offences; those offences deserve eternal ruin. They are not meant to secure, independent of the Almighty conversion of heart; they have no power to effect that change. They are not meant to relieve distress; I do not tell you to do this, in order that you may be less alarmed, in order that you may be less in misery on account of your sins; I wish the deepest distress you ever felt on account of sin may be deeper still; it is better to pass through any anguish of heart now, than to turn from the Saviour. But I tell you of these means, because they are those which God employs to soften obduracy of heart, to lessen prejudice, to make a person feel more and more his guilt, to make him more and more desirous to be saved through Christ, and at last to bring him to that state of heart, in which humbled and mourning he "believes on the Lord Jesus Christ," and "is saved." I do not tell you of these things, to procrastinate your turning to the Saviour; for remember, that unless you "turn," you "die." I say to every individual here that unless he turn to the Lord

Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners, whatever means of this kind he may employ and however long and earnestly and sincerely he use them, he will "die." And the only value of these means is to bring you—(as, thanks be to God! they often do bring the sinner)—quickly to embrace this offered mercy and lay hold of the salvation that is in Jesus Christ.

And now then, in conclusion, will you act upon these directions? Oh! that you would believe now. Oh! that your hearts might be brought to perceive how your honour, your safety, your happiness, your dignity, for time and for eternity, are all involved in this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Oh! that you would honour Him, who came from heaven to the cross in order that He might save you. Oh! that you would honour His blessed Word, and at once throwing away all prejudice turn to Him. But if you feel that repugnance in your hearts that hinders you—wickedly and criminally hinders you—from laying hold of that "great salvation," then, my dear friends, employ these means. Humble yourselves for it before God—read—think—speak—act—pray—in order that your minds

may be brought to that blessed state, which you feel to be essential to your salvation. And ask God in all, that He would meet you and bless you. Do it from this day. Do it without intermission. Do it in order to accomplish the greatest business of life. Never rest from it, until your hearts are changed. But remember, that if you do it for years, and yet do not "believe in Jesus Christ," you are cast away at last. This one act involves all—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." And if there is the slightest value in the directions I have given, all their value lies in this—that they may be the blessed means of bringing you to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

May His grace incline your hearts to that blessed result. I shall have occasion this evening, in concluding this series of addresses to unconverted sinners, to recapitulate the motives, that ought thus to act on such. Meanwhile, let me ask you to employ these means, and to pray to God that you may feel the motives, and that you may be led in fact to believe on Him to the saving of your souls.

SERMON XXIII.

CONCLUDING REMONSTRANCE WITH THE UNCONVERTED.

PREACHED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW, ON SUNDAY EVENING, NOV. 24, 1839.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life."—Deut. xxx. 19.

I HAVE, my brethren, for several successive Sabbaths, selected all the most solemn and influential considerations with which I am acquainted, to induce those that are unconverted to turn from the error of their ways. I am sensible that they might have been set before you in a more effectual manner; I am sensible that there are many of the ministers of Christ, who might much more influentially have brought both the alarming and the encouraging topics of the Gospel to bear upon your minds; but at the same time, these truths themselves have been placed before you, in the light which God has thrown upon them in His Word; and I therefore say, no less than Moses said just ere he was called to his rest—"I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life." It was his singular happiness, to be to a great degree successful in that advice which he gave; since we read that those to whom he addressed these words, who had witnessed the miracles of the wilderness and entered with Joshua into Canaan, both served the Lord themselves and induced the members of their families to serve Him, all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua. May the enumeration of many most awakening truths have the same blessed effect among you. For this, my dear hearers, I have selected them; not that there is any satisfaction in dwelling on the awful prospects of unconverted men, but because by bringing those alarming truths to bear upon the understanding, the conscience, and the heart, many may through the mercy of God be saved from experiencing them; and it is

better to have the mind now much tried, than to endure in a hopeless eternity all the anguish which it shrinks from anticipating here.

Once more, before I close this series of addresses, I would recapitulate to you some of those considerations; and once more I charge it upon the consciences of all in this church who have not yet turned to the Lord, that they would "choose life"—that comparing, contrasting the condition of those who believe with that of those who believe not, they may be led to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that they may be saved."

But first, before comparing once more those conditions, let me remind you, that God has, in this passage and in many others in His Word, assured sinners in general that it is their duty thus to turn. It is no unauthorised language, when I bid you "choose life;" it is the Word of God. And many other passages, in exactly a similar spirit, urge upon every unconverted person the same great duty. Some of these I will not dwell upon, but I beg you to peruse them in secret and dwell upon them much; and by the mere repetition of them here, I am certain that every one may come to the conviction that it is his instant duty to turn to the Lord.

God calls upon persons to turn to Him from their evil ways. For thus He has spoken—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "Go and proclaim"—(we read again)—"Return,

thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Another prophet was commissioned thus to address them: "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye—turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Another prophet addresses sinners in the name of God—"Come and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn and He will heal us, He hath smitten and He will bind us up." Again, the same prophet says to the whole ten tribes of Israel—"Turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually." "O Israel," again he says—"return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips." And one other prophet thus addressed them in the name of God—"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil."

Another series of passages invites and commands sinners at once to repent of their sins. Thus you find this expression in the prophet Ezekiel—"Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations." When the forerunner of the Lord Jesus came, he was commissioned to preach the same doctrine. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Our Saviour commissioned His disciples to repeat the same urgent command; and still, after the day of Pentecost the same duty was enforced upon all to whom they addressed their message; for when three thousand

were stricken in their consciences and asked "what they must do," the apostles said to them—"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Again; on the multitude assembling upon the occasion of a miracle wrought by two of the apostles, they thus addressed the assembled throng; "Repent ye and be converted," (or, as the word is, "Repent and convert yourselves,") "that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Simon Magus when "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity"—(that is, when altogether at enmity towards God and the slave of sin)—was also thus addressed: "Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." And thus, generally, were men called to repent—that is, to change their minds, and whereas they had loved sin, to love it no more; and whereas they had lived in sin, to live in it no more. Thus in both Testaments, are men continually urged to change their minds and habits.

We find our Lord saying to those who surrounded Him—"Enter ye in at the strait gate"—that is, begin the road to heaven; and, though it is very narrow, take care and enter upon it. We find many exhortations to men to believe. It is said of the ministry of John, that when he called upon men to repent, he called upon them also to believe. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel." In that passage which we considered this morning, a sinner is directed at once to "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ that he may be saved;" he obeyed the command, and lived. And our Lord (as I explained at the same time) has, in the eleventh chapter of St. Matthew, urged upon all, who are labouring under sorrow and danger and doubt, to do the same; "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

I will only quote two more passages on this subject. If you will look at the eighteenth chapter of Ezekiel and the thirtieth verse, you will find this exhortation from the Almighty—"Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin: cast away from you all your transgression whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a clean heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? for I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn yourselves and live ye." While that is the exhortation of a prophet in the Old Testament, this is the exhortation of an apostle in the New—"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble; submit yourselves therefore unto God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

Hence, then, let there be no doubt or difficulty in any person's mind as to the will of God in this matter. It is quite plain from these repeated admonitions of His Word, that it is His will in reference to all here who are ungodly, that they should "turn from their sin;" that they should "repent of their iniquity;" that they should "return unto the Lord;" that they should "enter in at the strait gate;" that they should "be converted;" that they should "make unto themselves a clean heart and a new spirit;" that they should "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" or, in the language of our text, that they should "choose life."

Now, with the help of God, I desire to set before you again some of those motives, which should induce each person in this assembly to comply with these repeated commands of their Creator. God has bid you thus to "believe in the Lord Jesus

Christ." That exhortation includes all the rest; and let me now show you again why you ought to believe.

It may be, notwithstanding all these admonitions, that some—(alas! it is to be feared that it will be so)—will reject them, or will go on in a course of indifference and neglect to the end. Now if there should be any, that, by any mistake in judgment, by any false opinion, by any prevailing sin, by any fatal procrastination, or by any other temptation by which the enemy of their souls may entangle them to their destruction, should refuse to turn to the Lord and believe in Jesus Christ, then this is what they must expect.

Every such person here has innumerable sins to answer for before God—sins of habit, of act, of word, of thought—all that he has committed himself, and all that he has, by example or advice, led others to commit. The sins of omission, no less than those of commission, have been noticed by God; all that he has failed to do that is right, no less than all that he has actually done that is wrong. And not actions merely (though the catalogue of omitted duty is fearfully vast); but the long catalogue of neglected affections. He ought to have loved God, and he never loved Him; he ought to have delighted in God, and he fled from Him; he ought to have trusted Him, and he disbelieved Him; he ought to have revered Him, and he treated Him with levity; he ought to have been devoted to His service, and He lived in the indulgence of proud self-will. All this neglect of every thing that was due to the infinite God has been marked by Him. It is the corruption of a whole life; it is the depravity of an entire nature; a whole nature depraved and defiled by sin, has been marked in all the operations of every one of its faculties by the infinite God. And (what is worse than all) each person here, who is not converted by Divine grace, has to answer for his rejection of the Saviour—for having heard of Christ and never welcomed the message of His Word. He has shown infinite kindness and compassion; He has all-sufficiency to save; His excel-

lence is perfect ; every grace is in Him perfect, and all blend in harmonious perfection, so as to demand the admiration of all His disciples. He has conferred upon that sinner innumerable benefits ; He has offered him blessings more vast still ; and this in the exercise of a compassion which is truly Divine. For that sinner's sake, amongst others, He left the height of glory, to come down to the agony of the cross. Though a Being, compared with whom we are less than the grain of dust compared with the sun in the heavens, yet for our sakes—for the sake of each sinner here—He came down to the agony of the cross. And that sinner despises Him—proves by his habitual life that he rejects the Saviour, that he never would trust Him, that he never was grateful to Him, that he never loved Him, that he never honoured Him, but that he had a heart which could stand out against that miracle of mercy, that prodigy of Divine kindness, the highest exemplification of love that the universe has ever seen, or perhaps ever will see. Every sinner here stands out against all, with an obduracy which has no parallel amongst the lost spirits. And for this, will each one have to answer before God. It is a guilt that is proportioned to the excellence and kindness of that Being who is offended ; it is a guilt, which no language of man can express, which will be seen only in its heinousness when eternity develops all its glories and all its horrors. God Almighty has marked it all. The day of judgment is coming. The time is coming, when, as we now meet in quiet and peace here, we shall stand amongst the assembled throng before the Lord of all. Our eyes shall see Him, as we now see each other. We shall stand before that Son of God ; once the victim of malice here, once an unresisting Lamb amongst His reviling enemies, but then sitting on His “great white throne” and coming to judgment—the “King of kings and the Lord of lords.” And on that day, when His friends shall lift up their heads in triumph, will His enemies in vain call on the rocks and the mountains to hide them from the wrath of the Lamb ; for on

that day shall He pronounce the terrible sentence on each, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.” Each of you must stand before a Judge, who is as holy as He is great, who cannot endure sin ; we trifle with it, but He never does. We shall stand before One, who is both omniscient and holy ; who has marked every secret thought and every uttered fugitive word ; who hears all, who knows all, who has never forgotten, and never can forget, the least transgression, even of heart, of which we have been guilty. We shall stand before Him, who is the Almighty and Omniscient ; whose sentence must be executed, against whom it is in vain to wrestle, and under whom the most obdurate enemy must be crushed. We shall stand before that Judge, who is eternal and unchangeable ; before Him, whose being we never can outlive, and who, being perfectly holy, must hate those, who are sinners ; and while those, who are now living a life of blasphemy, must be daily renewing their horrid enmity against the Almighty, and shall throughout eternity prolong (as it were) their offending against the Lord of all, and sin yet more and more, so must His hatred of that depravity be for ever renewing, for ever deepening, and accumulated woe break on the head of the miserable sinner. In this guilt, for which we have all to answer, there is not one that will escape that judgment at the last day ; and none can meet it, except as his soul is washed in the blood of Christ, and he has Christ for his Friend.

That punishment, which awaits the sinner, is certain. There is nothing, upon which you most reckon, my dear hearers, that is half so certain as this. Many contingencies might disappoint all your expectations, formed from a knowledge of the past ; but this is as certain as if it were now. It is as certain as the being of God, because God has spoken thus plainly and irrevocably in His Word ; and no less surely are we met in His name to-night, than we shall stand before His judgment-seat, and then receive the punishment due to our transgressions unless we are in Christ.

That punishment, let me remind you, will be as intolerable as it is certain. *That* any one might conceive, knowing that he has to endure the vengeance of an infinite God—the just and holy vengeance of that God. How can a sinner endure it? Think only of the awful terms in which that punishment is spoken of in Scripture. To be bathed in the “lake of fire;” to be crushed to “everlasting destruction;” to be “ground to powder;” to be like “chaff in the furnace!” Or to confine ourselves to one single sentence, which the Lord Jesus has declared that He will then pronounce upon those who do not love Him; “Depart from Me, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” That torment is—to be eternally separated from God and Christ, from the source of all good (and there can be no blessing if He does not give it); it is to be forever separated from the source of goodness as well as of happiness, and to be totally destitute of both; it is to be lashed on eternity, utterly destitute and utterly undone. It is not only to be alienated from Him, and doomed to depart, but it is to be “accursed” too; to be under the curse and frown of the omnipotent God; to be shut up in the dungeon of those He hates, to be placed among those who are vilest in their own nature and most offensive to Him; for the sinner to have his doleful companions among those, who are all branded with an equal depravity and sentenced to an equal vice. It is to be shut up with those, in whom no goodness is left; in whom enmity, remorse, and terror are raging, and who must be each other’s tormentors and their own. It is to be sentenced to “everlasting fire”—whatever that torment signifies, for that immortal body as well as that immortal soul; both of which, we have reason to fear, will be raised to endure a degree of torment, which no creature in this world could have borne without dissolution.

It is to endure this eternally. All who die without Christ, who have lived the enemies of God, who die His enemies, who rise up at the judgment-day His enemies, *you*, who live on through eternity His enemies—

they are sentenced to an eternal torture; a torture, the ages of which will be as numerous as were the moments of guilty joy in this world; as numerous as the words of defiance spoken here; as numerous as the thoughts which dared the Almighty God’s displeasure; as numerous as the words of mercy in His Word which were despised; as numerous as the blessings which were wasted; as numerous as the invitations which were refused. And when ages, as numerous as all these sins have been, shall be exhausted, there is an eternity of woe still; and when the weary spirit shall have lived on to a period of unknown duration in all these accumulating horrors, still that horrible sound will always be ringing in the ears of the lost—“For ever! for ever!”

Now, my brethren, this is surely bad enough; this is surely a doom, which every one, who has the least reflection, ought, if it be possible, to guard against. But it will be still worse, to feel that you have been your own destroyer; to look back on this short life, and to think—“I might have been so blessed; others, as lost as me, had held upon the offered salvation and are in bliss, but I have perished. Christ was ready to save me, but I would not come to Him; the Holy Spirit was ready to sanctify me, but I would not seek His grace; heaven was opened to me, but I have shut its gates. I might have escaped this doom, but I would rush upon it; for some vain pleasure, for some momentary interest, I chose to throw away my soul!” What unspeakable remorse, mingled with that awful terror that anticipates still from age to age, throughout the boundless eternity, yet worse—what an awful remorse will mingle for ever in the agitated bosom of the undying creature, that is lying under the load of his infinite Maker’s wrath!

Oh! my friends, will you not strive to escape from this awful doom? Do you doubt it? You will not doubt, at that awful day when the sentence shall be pronounced; in the name of God, do not doubt now. Do you mean to delay? Delay may be fatal. Seize the moment as it flies, and now try to escape from Divine wrath. Do you trifle with it?

My friends, you will not trifle with it, when you are crushed underneath its weight. You can be brave when the danger is distant. There will be no braving then, when the Almighty God lifts up His arm at last to destroy you. Oh! in the name of God escape from a wrath which you cannot bear; as certain as your existence, and from which yet there is the opportunity of escape. "I have set before you this day life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life." You know what is attached to unbelief; you know what must come upon you, if you are not the real disciples of Christ. In the name of God, then, seek to be His disciples from this day.

But let me turn to another class of motives, which (blessed be God!) He has given us, to animate us to turn to Him, and to make it seem so blessed to become His disciples as it is mournful to remain His enemies.

Some amongst those that have hitherto lived in ungodliness, may hope and believe that they will turn to the Lord; and this, in consequence of what they have heard now. What will be their blessed lot? Christ has made an atonement for their innumerable sins; for that corruption of nature, for which they can make no atonement themselves. Christ Jesus has offered to save them from all the doom which their sins have deserved; He deserves eternal heaven, as they deserve eternal hell, and if they are found amongst His disciples He will rescue them. God Almighty has declared His readiness to accept them in His Son, whom, in His love, He sent to save them from this doom; and God the Spirit is ready to sanctify and to bless them, which He will upon their receiving Christ, taking them under His care for ever. From the time that their hearts are drawn to Christ, they are the adopted children of the Most High; their sins are pardoned; their souls are justified; they themselves enter on the possession of all covenanted blessings, and God is their Father and their Friend for ever. The promises, vast as they are, are theirs. All that they have done in the past guilty years is obliterated at once, entirely, and for ever. From that day their lives become useful;

their death-bed will have peace; they will rise in triumph; they will see the glorious Saviour when He returns with God, and that day which seals the doom of His enemies will be the time of their entrance on unspeakable blessings. Jesus Christ, who has loved them, will love them still. He has prepared for them mansions in heaven; He will bring them there. *There* there is no sorrow, there is no sin; *there* no death shall terminate their joys, and there shall be no more curse of God. Throughout that vast eternity, which is their source of exultation as it seals the despair of the wicked, they will be as happy as their heart can desire. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Think what it is, to spend an eternity in the unwearied activity of immortal spirits, or to exchange those active services for the blissful repose of adoring contemplation. Think what it is, in addition to all the joys which a knowledge of this world and the wonders of the universe may give, and an acquaintance with all the best and fairest creatures which God has formed—the noblest society which the imagination ever contemplated, of glorious form and of glorious mind—think what it is, with all this, to be present with the Source of all; to love Him perfectly, and to be perfectly loved; to know that nothing can separate us for ever; to trace, in all our happiness, the proofs of a love which passeth knowledge; to pour out again, in return, all possible gratitude, and to feel that we are infinite debtors still; to know that the infinite God has become our friend for ever, and that He has carried us through all the changes of this short and dangerous life, only to make us immortal spirits through the countless ages of eternity, where we shall know all His goodness and love Him as we ought. All this is before the child of God. It is certain—it is near—it is eternal. A few more days may land each Christian there, where he will find it unspeakably greater than any imagination can now conceive, or language describe. If you become, my dear

hearers, the true disciples of Christ, all this may be yours; for it is offered to you in His Word.

And let me now, then, finally appeal to you, whether you will, or whether you will not receive this great salvation. "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life." Are not these reasons, I pray you, why you should choose life? Are not these reasons why instantly, in other words, you should turn to the Lord and live? Do you still—*do you still*—reject His love? Are there any here, that feel yet unhumiliated, unsubdued—that do not, that cannot love religion? and must I see you sinking in the waves of Divine wrath, like Peter in the water, but not like Peter laying hold of the Hand that is stretched out to save, but rather folding your proud arms upon your bosom and sinking down beneath the wave? Must I see you, for the love of sin, for the love of guilty pleasure, for the love of a little vile gain, for the love of that which you ought to detest, or else should despise—must I see you, *for that*, indeed, reject this great salvation, for which God formed you, and for which it would be worth while to live through any period of labour, and toil, and care! Oh! my friends, it seems as though I could not quit you thus; and yet I have said to you all I can to bring you to Christ; and if you repel those truths, what else can I utter? I have no language, which you have not heard a thousand times; I have no solicitations to offer, which you have not heard from me and other ministers many a time. And you have repelled them all! I must leave you to yourselves and to God. But let me tell you, that this may be the very last appeal you will ever hear. You may be delaying, but God may disappoint every hope. Perhaps ere another Sabbath comes round, while you are engaged in business or in pleasure, God Almighty may have said to you, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." Or it may be, that, the Divine mercy having come to its term, you are, like Judas, upon the very verge, upon the very edge of a series of actions, which shall hurry you

further and further from God, till your doom is as irrevocable as was his. It may be, that a series of terrible temptations, for which you are not in the slightest degree prepared, is woven for you by the great enemy of souls, watching whom he may devour; you have no shelter in Christ and no protection in grace, and you may be caught by that snare of the wicked one, and one unforeseen temptation after another may only hurry you further and further from all goodness and all hope, till you are lost. It may be, that unknown to you at this moment, in your frame may be lying the seeds of some fatal malady, which may soon unfold its power, and, gathering strength, baffle all the skill of those that watch over you. It may be, that in a few days, or a few months, we may hear, that after foolish friends have flattered, and your own proud heart has deceived you, and said, 'I shall not die,' and 'It is not fatal,' and you have put off the thought of death—perhaps strong pain has given place to unexpected delirium, and so in the midst of the ravings of despair you have died. Perhaps it may be, that your heart will grow altogether indifferent. There is no other truth that you can hear, which you have not heard; you have repelled them all, and God may lead you to hardness, so that you never more shall feel in the least. Perhaps this is the very crisis of your history throughout eternity; perhaps it is the very turning point; and if you refuse to listen to the invitations of Divine mercy now, again I say it may be the last appeal that shall even in the least penetrate your conscience, and you may have throughout eternity to look back on this very moment, as the time when your doom was finally sealed. May God grant that it may be otherwise; but if you are not in earnest, if you will not listen to these commands to repent and turn and believe and love and live to God, it is far too probable.

But I do trust, that not a few among those who have lived in carelessness, will turn to God. And if, my dear friends, God has touched your hearts, and you feel the wish to be saved, let me beseech you to do this work *at once*. Do not delay one single mo-

ment. Even now, the throne of grace is open ; even now, that you are sitting in this house of prayer, may you be engaged with your God ; even now may you, feeling the necessity of being saved, ask the Lord, that those very impressions, which are made upon your consciences now, may lead to a speedy and thorough change. Do not waste another hour. Every consideration prompts you to instant action, because of the danger of delay, because you know not how long God may grant you to live. I heard only yesterday of one ungodly man, who had been for some time saying that he would change his life, and that when that church in which he worshipped should open again (it was to be only two or three weeks from that time), he would then attend constantly and turn to God. Before the day came, on which that church was re-opened, he was a corpse ; never could he put his design into execution. "Now is the accepted time ; now is the day of salvation ;" and whatever you do, I beseech you do it now.

And then, let me beseech you, my dear friends, to act in this manner thoroughly. Seek to submit yourselves to God, to His righteousness and His law. Seek to turn from all sin, of heart as well as of life. Seek to put yourselves entirely in the hands of the Redeemer to save you. Commit yourselves to Him, just in the very spirit in which the prophet Elijah committed himself to the care of God, when he placed himself in that celestial chariot, and knew not whither it would take him. Place yourselves in the care of Christ, just as the prophet Jeremiah committed himself to the care of those in whom he trusted, when he placed himself in their hands to raise him from that subterranean dungeon. Commit yourselves entirely to the care of God ; give up all self-will, and from this day ask Him to take the entire government of you. Ask Him to give you His Spirit, that He may entirely mould and controul you ; ask Him to give you wisdom and grace to make His whole law your rule of life, His will your will ; that so you may have no more opposition of heart to Him through all eternity. Ask Him to justify you freely by His

righteousness, to teach you by His Spirit, to sanctify you by His grace, and to make you wholly His. Enter in at the straight gate ; and do not stand loitering and looking at it. Now, while your hearts are softened and moved, I beseech you to seek from God that "new heart," that "heart of flesh" in place of the "heart of stone," which He only can give. Now enter upon a new course ; begin to fulfil every duty in dependence upon Divine grace. And from this day, seek not merely to be a believer, but to be an eminent believer. You have lost much time ; try to redeem the time that remains, and put it to the best account. Do not "halt between two opinions," but give yourselves heartily to God. Weigh well His claims ; see whether or not you are His, and determine in His strength, that all your energies shall henceforth be consecrated to His service, whose you are and whom you ought to serve. If there be one devoted Christian on earth, seek that that one shall be you ; to surpass all your fellows in light, in decision, in duty in love, and to leave a more blameless and beautiful example behind you than any one else. Seek to be entirely consecrated to God. Do not hope merely to creep into heaven, but strive to have "an abundant entrance" into glory. Place all worldly matters in due subordination. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." Look at the glorious pattern which Christ has set you, till your heart is smitten with His loveliness, and you wish to resemble Him. Lift up your hearts daily and hourly, that His grace may accomplish this great work in you, and that he may make you a monument of the omnipotence of His grace, as well as of His unwearied and inexhaustible mercy. Thus live, and thus die ; and strive that in your future life, be it longer or be it shorter, you may render as much of glory to the Saviour as you are capable of rendering on this side heaven. Endeavour to lead your fellow sinners with you to heaven ; induce them, if possible, to seek an interest in the honours and rewards of eternity. Try to draw—

I had almost said, to *drag*—as many of

your fellow sinners as you can to eternal happiness. Seek to strengthen them in their weakness, to enlighten them in their ignorance ; and pray that God may send light into your heart that you may teach them. Thus aim to be the consistent, vigorous, and devoted disciples of Christ through the remainder of your days. Let the very hope which is before you, will animate you for the work ; it will be better than limiting your thoughts to their being saved. There is a glorious reward before you ; and God will crown you with blessing if you seek to attain it.

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Chalmers, Dr. ..	22	562	Duff, Dr.	28	714	Duff, Dr.	35	885
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WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Bowers, J.	20	515-16	Lessey, T.	6	162	Newton, R.	21	548—9
Bromley, J.	10	270	.....	20	513	Parsons, J.	12	321
Bunting, Dr.	2	56	.....	28	709	.....	32	818
.....	12	322	M'All, Dr.	24	615	Raffles, Dr.	17	437
Burder Dr.	14	378	M'Allum, Dr.	4	112	.....	17	448
Clarke, Dr. A. ...	2	60	Newton, R.	4	112	Stewart, Dr.	6	162
Dixon, J.	10	269	.....	6	163	Thorpe, W.	8	214
.....	37	939	.....	12	321	Watson, R.	10	270
Hamilton, R. W. .	21	549,50	.....	14	377	.....	17	439
Jay, W.	26	656	.....	17	453			

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Name.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Name.	Vols.	Nos.
Ainslie, R.	21	550	Hamilton, R. W. . .	20	518	Parsons, J.	8	213
Alliott, R.	10	272	Hatchard, J.	15	396—7	Pentycross, T. ...	5	128
Belfrage, Dr.	4	109	Heugh, H.	14	380	Philip, Dr.	6	167
Bennett, Dr.	12	323	Hill, R.	21	552	Raffles, Dr.	33	842
Bennie, A.	37	942	Irving, E.	2	57—8	Reed, Dr.	17	440—1
Binney, T.	35	880	James, J. A.	7	186	Robins, S.	28	713
Burder, Dr.	8	218	—	10	271	Russell, D.	6	164
Burnet, J.	12	323	Jay, W.	6	167	Smith, T.	2	58—9
—	12	331	Julian, J.	12	325	Stewart, Dr.	10	272
Capel, S. R.	15	413	Knight, J.	2	37	Thodey, S.	12	340
Carter, W.	40	1,010	Langley, J.	22	555	Thorpe, W.	4	111
Collyer, Dr.	3	61—2	Lucy, W.	12	325	Townley, H.	2	54
Cooke, Dr.	17	442	M'All, Dr.	6	163	—	2	57
Dillon, Dr.	30	765	M'Donald, J.	1	5	Vance, W. F.	32	822
Gordon, Dr.	8	214	Morison, Dr. R. . .	4	109	Wardlaw, Dr.	21	551
Griffin, J.	7	186	Mortimer, T.	6	164	Williams, J. C. ...	4	110
Halley, Dr.	39	1,003	Noel, Baptist W. . .	10	275	Young, D.	26	659
Hamilton, R. W. . .	4	110						

BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Birt, I.	10	276	Knibb, W.	22	558	Price, Dr.	22	574
Brown, J.	14	386	—	37	946	—	24	613
Carey, E.	7	175	Leifchild, Dr.	24	610	Roberts, T.	26	915
Evans, J. H.	37	942	Lister, J.	7	175	Summers, S.	26	663
Fletcher, Dr.	8	224	Marshman, Dr. ...	7	176	Swan, T.	12	330
Hall, R.	8	222	Murch, Dr.	12	328	Yates, W.	10	276
Hinton, J. H.	14	387						

BOSTON BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY.—Wayland, F. 5 118

MORAVIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Cumming, J.	35	886	Hancock, W.	16	420	Sherman, J.	22	504
Cunningham, J. W.	17	452	Parsons, E. Jun. . .	7	177	Sibthorp, R. W. . .	8	218
Dillon, Dr.	3	79						

HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Adkins, T.	1	7	Hill, R.	14	382	Roby, W.	10	274
Clayton, G.	19	497	Morison, Dr. J. ...	17	443	Sherman, J.	26	658
Fletcher, A.	2	49	Parsons, J.	30	762	Townley, H.	12	324
Fletcher, Dr.	8	215,17	Raffles, Dr.	35	881	Young, J.	32	817
Good, J. E.	22	553						

OTHER CHARITIES.

<i>Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society.</i>			M'Neile, H.	17	346	Gordon, Dr.	8	221
Dillon, Dr.	27	699	—	19	496	Hill, R.	12	327
Evans, J. H.	40	1,007	Noel, B. W.	41	1,056	M'Neile, H.	6	169
Nunn, W.	35	896	O'Sullivan, Dr. ...	10	277	Morison, Dr. J. ...	6	170
—	35	896	<i>Christian Instruction Society.</i>			Mortimer, T.	8	221
<i>Baptist Building Fund.</i>			Parsons, J.	10	262	Noel, G. T.	10	273
Birt, J.	10	268	<i>Church Building Fund.</i>			Thomson, Dr. A. ...	10	273
Watson, R.	17	453	Clissold, H.	36	916	<i>Dispensaries.</i>		
<i>Bible Society.</i>			Forster, J.	37	929	Bull, E.	36	902
Jay, W.	36	925	Melville, H.	36	908	Denham, J. F.	13	364
<i>Blind Society for.</i>			Wilson, Bp.	11	295	Melville, H.	21	539
Noel, B. W.	39	991	<i>Church Pastoral-Aid Society.</i>			Mortimer, T.	11	289
<i>Bristol Academy.</i>			Brodrick, W. J. ...	36	914	Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	10	262
Hall, R.	8	223	Dale, T.	29	729	<i>District Visiting Societies.</i>		
—	8	223	—	33	836	Benson, C.	28	715
<i>British Orphan Asylum.</i>			Gilbert, P. P.	33	839	Cunningham, J. W.	30	767
Bradley, C.	39	997	Hebert, C.	35	889	Curling, W.	23	584
Eden, R.	34	868	—	37	936	Dale, T.	21	532
Sandys, J.	19	481	M'Neile, H.	35	887	Hughes, Hugh.	36	912
<i>A British Reformation Society.</i>			Seymour, M. II. ...	35	897	M'Cauley, Dr.	34	852
Armstrong, N.	17	441	Stowell, H.	28	712	Melville, H.	23	587
Cumming, J.	26	660	—	32	819	Plumptre, H. S. . .	31	789
—	30	767	Weight, G.	35	897	Robins, S.	42	1,082-3
—	37	944	<i>Continental Society.</i>			Stowell, H.	26	661
Dalton, W.	17	450	Armstrong, N.	17	444	Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	12	337
M'Neile, H.	14	384	Bulteel, H. B.	17	440	— Bp. J. B. . . .	16	429
			Galton, J. L.	24	606	—	19	496

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Name.	Vols.	Nos.
Witty, J. F.	34	857	Jackson, T.	42	1,073	M'Neile, H.	19	494
<i>Ear Dispensary.</i>			<i>Ladies' Charity Sch. (Snow Hill).</i>			Stowell, H.	41	1,054
Colls, J. F.	38	953	Dale, T.	37	945	<i>Philanthropic Society.</i>		
Dodsworth, W. ..	39	998	Fell, H. F.	37	945	Anderson, J. S M	39	995
<i>European Missionary Society.</i>			Hughes, Hugh ...	42	1,080	Benson, C.	4	116
Stowell, H.	30	762	Stowell, H.	30	763	Horsley, Bp.	39	978
Tottenham, E.	37	943	<i>Ladies' Hibernian Female School Society.</i>			Melville, H.	35	886
<i>Eye and Ear Infirmary.</i>			Galton, J. L.	30	772	Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	10	279
Croly, Dr.	15	391	M'Neile, H.	17	436	Wilberforce, Arch.S	37	943
<i>Female Orphan Asylum.</i>			O'Sullivan, Dr. ...	28	707	<i>Port of London, &c. Society.</i>		
Bethell, Bp.	8	206	Shaw, R.	12	334	Andrews, Dr.	12	335
Dillon, Dr.	13	355	<i>Ladies' Negro Education Soc.</i>			<i>Prayer Book and Homily Society.</i>		
Stowell, H.	37	940	Melville, H.	35	874	Scholefield, Prof. . .	6	148
<i>Female Orphan Asylum, Paddington.</i>			Sibthorp, B. W. ...	10	275	_____	28	710
Moore, D.	40	1,030	Stowell, H.	32	823	Sidney, E.	37	943
<i>Female Protection Society.</i>			<i>London Aged Christian Society.</i>			Sumner, Bp. C. R. .	14	381
Champneys, W. W.	37	947	Baker, T. B.	30	767	<i>Prison Discipline Improvement Society.</i>		
Curling, W.	39	982	<i>London City Mission.</i>			Cunningham, J. W. .	8	225
Laing, D.	40	1,006	Evans, J. H.	27	690	<i>Protestant Association.</i>		
Williams, J.	35	890	Noel, B. W.	30	767	Holloway, Dr. ...	33	825
<i>Fever Hospital.</i>			Russell, Lord W. .	32	822	M'Neile, H.	35	878
Melville, H.	35	882	<i>London Female Mission.</i>			_____	39	996
Noel, Hon. B. W. .	15	403	Hall, P.	35	892	Montgomery, R. ...	38	952
Shepherd, Dr.	1	10	Kirk, E. N.	31	793	O'Sullivan, Dr. ...	38	967
<i>Gospel Tract Society.</i>			Young, R.	38	964	Stowell, H.	32	822
Borrows, W.	8	228	<i>London Female Penitentiary.</i>			_____	38	967
Irving, E.	8	228	Melville, H.	20	508	_____	41	1,058
<i>Guardian Society.</i>			Sibthorp, R. W. ...	8	207	<i>Protestant Operative Associations.</i>		
Mann, I.	14	380	Wilcox, J.	8	207	Curling, W.	42	1,076
Marsh, W.	7	192	<i>London Seaman's Society.</i>			M'Neile, H.	39	1,001
<i>Hibernian Society.</i>			Clayton, J. Jnn. .	6	157	<i>Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.</i>		
Cooke, Dr. H.	34	866-7	<i>Lying-in Hospital.</i>			Cole, H.	41	1,058
Irving, E.	6	160	Harcourt, Arbp. ...	11	287	Gwyther, J.	27	681
<i>Humane Society.</i>			Ryder, Bp.	6	156	Melville, H.	34	870
Dillon, Dr.	33	831	<i>Magdalen Hospital.</i>			Otter, Bp.	5	140
Gilly, W. S.	8	209	Carr, Bp.	11	286	Sumner, Bp. J. B. .	24	607
<i>Irish Church Education Society.</i>			Noel, Hon. B. W. .	41	1,055	Tomlinson, G. C. .	27	692
Beresford, M. G. .	35	883	<i>Metropolis Churches Fund.</i>			Welburn, M.	34	868
<i>Irish Clergy Relief.</i>			Beamish, H. H. ...	33	831	<i>Religious Tract Society.</i>		
Robins, S.	27	702	Blomfield, Bp. ...	29	750	Close, F.	22	556
<i>Irish Society,</i>			Dale, T.	40	1,021	Parsons, J.	10	260
Beamish, H. H. ...	{ 14	358	M'Neile, H.	39	995	Sibthorp, R. W. ...	13	258
Noel, B. W.	15	394	Montgomery, R. .	35	894	Vance, W. F.	18	472
Stowell, H.	30	765	<i>Monthly Tract Society.</i>			<i>Sailors' Orphan School.</i>		
_____	22	557	Beamish, H. H. ...	39	994	Armstrong, N. ...	18	466
_____	24	605	Marks, R.	10	271	Noel, B. W.	40	1,013
Sumner, Bp. J. B. .	10	268	Melville, H.	14	379	<i>Shipwrecked Fishermen's Society.</i>		
<i>Irish Evangelical Society.</i>			<i>Newfoundland &c. School ety.</i>			Burnet, Dr.	41	1,045
Burnet, J.	12	338	Brandram, A.	7	178	<i>Sons of the Clergy.</i>		
Cooper, W. H. ..	30	771	Bridge, T. F. H. .	38	972	Benson, C.	6	169
_____	33	838	Budd, H.	10	263	<i>Stepney College.</i>		
<i>Jews' Society.</i>			Close, F.	35	877	Carey, E.	10	277
Dillon, Dr.	10	267	Dale, T.	37	938	<i>Strangers' Friend.</i>		
Hodson, Archd. .	14	378	Haslegrave, J. ...	34	853	Moore, D.	41	1,048
Jerram, C.	12	324	Hawtreay, C. S. .	9	232	Noel, Hon. B. W. .	42	1,087
Marsh, W.	9	239	Melville, H.	32	820	Robins, S.	34	948
Simeon, C.	8	203	Sibthorp, R. W. ...	11	291	Warren, Dr.	2	39
_____	16	428	Sidney, E.	30	769	<i>Trinitarian Bible Society.</i>		
Thomason, T. ...	10	250	Wilberforce, Arch.S	41	1,059	Goodhart, C. J. . .	26	659
Melville, H.	36	917	Wilcox, J.	12	317	<i>Widow's Society.</i>		
<i>King's College Hospital.</i>			<i>Philo-Judean Society.</i>			Robins, S.	28	711
Melville, H.	36	917	M'Neile, H.	14	376	Ryder, Bp.	8	227
Benson, C.	37	948						

SERMONS ON THE PARABLES.

Dives and Lazarus:			Vaughan, Dr.	5	129	<i>The Lost Sheep</i>		
Harness, W.	1	4	<i>The Foolish Rich Man:</i>			Eland, G. E.	3	
King, R.	39	990	Noel, B. W.	36	906	Montgomery, R. . .		
Maude, H. R.	26	673	Philip, R.	8	209	Moore, D.		
Melville, H.	31	784						

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
The Lost Silver :			The Prepared Feast.			The Sower:		
Montgomery, R. . . .	35	894	Borrows, W.	28	718	Borrows, W.	25	645
The Prodigal Son:			Robins, S.	35	884	Page, T.	22	574
Beames, T.	33	827	The Pharisee and Publican:			The Seed in the Earth:		
Burnet, Dr.	31	794	Curling, W.	39	982	Hambleton, J.	17	458
Dillon, Dr.	9	233	The Good Samaritan:			Woodd, B.	1	7
Gregg, T. D.	20	520	Dillon, Dr.	13	342	The unjust Steward:		
Kirk, E. N.	34	851	The Pearl of Great Price:			Croly, Dr.	30	771
Noel, B. W.	33	824	Noel, B. W.	38	951	The Tares and the Wheat:		
Thompson, E.	28	724	Scobell, E.	13	358	Robins, S.	33	843.
The Wedding Garment:			The Foolish Virgins:			The Importunate Widow:		
Campbell, Dr.	11	292	Hughes, Hugh	33	843	Kelly, D.	35	895
Robins, S.	31	791	The Labourers in the Vineyard:					
			Styles, Dr.	14	370			

SERMONS ON MIRACLES.

The deaf and dumb spirit cast out:			The importunate woman of Canaan:			The woman healed by touching Christ's garment:		
Hunt, R. T.	1	9	Newton, R.	10	283	Noel, B. W.	24	614
Jay, W.	42	1,088	The ten lepers:			The tempest stilled:		
The pool of Bethesda:			Jay, W.	40	1,016	Sedger, T.	36	907
Blackburn, J.	2	35	The leper cleansed:			Classification of Christ's miracles:		
McMorland, P. . . .	26	656	Harding, J.	22	568	Watson, R.	15	410

SERMONS ON SCRIPTURE HISTORIES.

Cain:			David and Goliath :			The rich young man:		
Jay, W.	38	962	Melvill, H.	33	836	Bennett, Dr.	16	421
Abel:			David pursuing the Amalekites:			Moore, D.	38	957
Bradley, C.	40	1,031	Bradley, C.	32	807	Thorp, J.	16	417
Enoch:			Absalom:			The transfiguration:		
Melvill, H.	28	719	Noel, Baptist W. . . .	28	704	Hambleton, J.	38	966
Morison, Dr. J. . . .	7	201	Abijah:			Judas:		
Noah:			Coqueril, M.	33	845	Noel, Baptist W. . . .	36	907
Croly, Dr.	28	716	Hitchin, T.	32	808	— G. T.	8	212
Dobson, J. P.	8	203	Stratten, J.	39	979	The dying thief:		
Abraham offering up Isaac:			Ahab's fall:			Parsons, J.	35	873
Noel, B. W.	27	678	Melvill, H.	29	732	Wilson, D.	21	544
Lot's Wife:			The widow of Zarephath:			Peter at the cross:		
Hambleton, J.	32	810	Noel, Baptist W. . . .	31	790	Thorp, J.	26	673
Jacob at Bethel:			Shadrach, &c.			Emmaus:		
Hambleton, J.	40	1,017	Jay, W.	8	225	Hambleton, J.	39	991
Parsons, J.	27	693	Noel, Baptist W. . . .	35	890	Lydia:		
Moses in Egypt:			Daniel:			Dealtry, Dr.	33	826
Philip, Dr.	28	718	Cooper, J. R.	20	517	Paul converted:		
Moses at Horeb:			Nehemiah at Jerusalem:			Wolf, Dr.	33	840
Law, Archdeacon . .	33	845	Pearson, J. N.	30	760	Paul shipwrecked:		
Achan:			Jonah at Nineveh:			Jeans, G.	27	696
Parsons, J.	41	1,053	Dillon, Dr.	30	756	Barnabas at Antioch:		
Seymour, M. H. . . .	38	955	Christ at Capernaum.			Jay, W.	40	1,018
Balaam:			Jay, W.	42	1,088	Death of Herod:		
Smith, Dr. Pye . . .	31	776				Close, F.	42	1,080

SERMONS ON SCRIPTURE DOCTRINES.

The Trinity:			The fall:			Repentance:		
Ackland, Dr.	1	8	Burder, Dr.	7	197	Edouart, A. G.	38	956
Dale, T.	17	449	—	20	511	Noel, Baptist W. . . .	24	622
Melvill, H.	17	447	Harding, J.	41	1,043	Parsons, J.	41	1,052
Moore, Dr.	1	6	Melvill, H.	24	623	Thompson, E.	27	699
Cresswell, R.	38	965	Parsons, J.	35	876	Justification by faith:		
Cole, H.	41	1,063	Ryder, Bp.	6	156	McNeile, H.	17	436
Vernon, Mr.	1	6	Seymour, M. H. . . .	42	1,080	Seymour, M. H. . . .	40	1,020
Deity of Christ:			Original sin:			Williams, J.	32	807
Blomfield, Bp.	4	113	Kirk, E. N.	34	870	Assurance:		
Burder, S.	1	8	Melvill, H.	34	869	Burnet, J.	19	498
Melvill, H.	27	689	The Atonement:			Watson, R.	17	455
Robins, S.	32	816	Bunting, W. M. . . .	24	619	Immortality of the soul:		
Taylor, T.	11	304	Resurrection of Christ:			Melvill, H.	30	772
Williams, W. B. . . .	4	91	Champneys, W. W. .	34	871	Resurrection of the dead:		
—	11	312	Melvill, H.	15	400	Benson, C.	15	400
Divinity of the Holy Spirit:			Extent of the Atonement:			Bunting, Dr.	32	821
Melvill, H.	26	664	Melvill, H.	19	486	Green, S.	27	690
Taylor, T.	12	330	Millar, J.	16	422	Parsons, J.	32	816

SERMONS ON THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
Blackburn, J. (Truth of the Bible)	20	517	Cumming, J. (Objections to Scrip- ture)	37	935
Blomfield, Bp. (Effects of Christi- anity)	16	433	— (Ditto)	37	942
Blunt, H. (General Summary)	22	555	Hall, R. (Evidence from Mi- racles)	4	117
Chalmers, Dr. (Immortality of the Soul)	14	384-5	— (Future Judgment reasonable)	4	117
Clayton, G. (The Resurrection)	14	374	Halley, Dr, (Adaptation to Man's Nature)	39	1,003
Collyer, Dr. (Claims of Christianity)	3	61-2	— (Being of a God)	3	69
Cumming J. (The soul immaterial and immortal)	36	911	Parsons, E. Jun. (Infidelity tested)	31	786
— (Existence of God)	36	913	Seymour, M.H. (Analogy of Nature and Revelation)	38	963
— (Revelation Probable and Necessary)	36	914	Smith, Sidney. (From the Conversion of St. Paul)	19	483
— (The Bible Genuine)	36	918	Watson, J. (Inspiration of the New Testament)	27	687
— (The Bible Inspired).	36	924			
— (Objections to Scrip- ture)	37	928			

SERMONS ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS.

Loyalty towards rulers:	England, God's reserved portion:	Distress of nations:
Clayton, G. 1 7	M'Neile, H. 12 316	Marsden, J. B. 16 424
Curling, W. 30 774	National sins:	Necessity of national morality:
Fearne, F. G. 37 950	Parsons, J. 16 426	Smith, Dr. Pye 20 505
Foster, J. F. 21 538	Smith, W. H. 40 1,020	Necessity of national religion:
Sandys, J. 18 463	National apostasy:	Scott, J. 23 586
Scott, J. 23 597	Holloway, Dr. 33 825	Irish education scheme:
Symonds, A. R. 35 892	State of the times:	M'Neile, H. 19 482
The poor laws:	Binney, T. 14 375	— 19 484
Chalmers, Dr. 1 18	— 41 1,041	Duty of electors:
Manufacturing dist., distress in:	Cooper, J. 26 676	Wilks, S. C. 20 515
Melvill, H. 41 1,065	Forster, J. 37 929	Liberty, founded on Christianity:
Noel, Baptist, W. 42 1,067	Leifchild, Dr. 34 850	Jackson, T. 35 898
Popular commotion:	Smith, W. H. 37 929	Melvill, H. 25 649
Thompson, E. 42 1,073	Thompson, E. 26 666	God's government of nations:
Duty of a judge:	— 34 855	M'Neile, H. 36 903
Smith, Sidney 2 55	Thorpe, W. 16 431-2	
England's distinctions:	National judgments:	
Croly, Dr. 37 948	Irving, E. 20 507	

SERMONS RELATING TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

A national religious establish- ment defended:	Hill, W. H. 40 1,021	Seymour, M. H. 31 788
Chalmers, Dr. 22 561	Church authority:	Wait, Dr. 38 960
Dealtry, Dr. 21 549	M'Neile, H. 14 384	The voluntary system:
Harding, J. 29 748	Church Order:	Brown, J. 12 314
M'Neile, H. 30 766	Dale, T. 41 1,091	The Church's foes:
Scott, J. 18 469	Excellency of the liturgy:	Seymour, M. H. 34 866
The English Church establish- ment defended:	Burgess, R. 34 848	Puseyism:
Chesnutt, G. 24 620	Dale, T. 40 1,021	Cumming, J. 41 1,049
Crossman, F. G. 24 609	Dealtry, Dr. 21 549	Noel, B. W. 41 1,056
Gillmor, W. 29 741	Stowell, H. 37 941	— (Bapt. Regen.) 42 1,090
— 37 933	Williams, W. B. 6 172	— (Ditto) 42 1,091
M'Neile, H. 23 592	Character of the English liturgy:	— (Ditto) 42 1,092
593, 596, 598, 600	Wilkins, Dr. 18 464	Pratt, J. (Trad.) 36 909
— 37 929,	Church reform:	Scott, A. J. 40 1,023
930, 931, 932, 933	M'Neile, H. 19 496	— 40 1,026
Montgomery, R. 39 1,000	Duty of churchmen towards dissenters:	Stowell, H. 41 1,058
Welburn, M. 33 836	Webster, T. 12 317	Seymour, M.H. (Trad) 34 862
Williams, J. 33 838	Claims of dissenters:	Watson, T. (Bapt. Regeneration) 39 1,000
The Church Engl. defended:	Hunt, J. 10 260	Witty, J. F. 37 935
Dale, T. 39 990	Schism condemned:	
	Mortimer, T. 39 981	

SERMONS ON POPERY.

Errors of Rome:	The reformation commemorated and defended:	Seymour, M. H. 33 846
Cumming, J. 37 944	Hughes, Henry 27 680	Tottenham, E. 34 862
Dalton, W. 17 450	Melvill, H. 27 679	Character and aim of Popery:
Hoare, E. 36 922	— 31 792	Curling, W. 31 792
M'Neile, H. 39 1,002	Scholefield, Prof. 28 846	— 40 1,026
Tottenham, E. 23 603		Mortimer, T. 31 792

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
Russell, W.	31	794	Gunpowder plot:			Pope's authority:		
Seymour, M. H. .	31	792	Cator, C.	36	909	Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,040
Stowell, H.	32	822	Croly, Dr.	36	910	The mass:		
-----	38	967	Stowell, H.	36	910	Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,042
-----	41	1,058	Welburn, M. ...	37	926	Purgatory:		
Popery, the predicted apostacy:			England in danger from Popery:			Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,047
Haslegrave, J.	31	795	Curling, W.	56	910	Transubstantiation:		
O'Sullivan, Dr. ..	38	967	Seymour, M. H. ...	36	909	Seymour, M. H. ...	41	1,049
Seymour, M. H. ..	33	827	Invocation of saints:			-----	41	1,051
Present state of Popery:			McNeile, H.	39	996	Tradition:		
Tottenham, E. ...	33	846	Seymour, M. H. ..	41	1,044	Cuffe, T.	41	1,047
Popery unchanged:			Provision for sins after baptism:			Peter not the Rock:		
Stowell, H.	36	910	McNeile, H.	39	1,001	Barber, J. R.	41	1,050

SERMONS RELATING TO THE JEWS: THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROSPECTS.

Chalmers, Dr.	25	650	McNeile, H. (Nine lectures on the			Jew First")....	42	1082—3
Dillon, Dr.	15	408	prophecies relating to the Jew-			Saunders, I.	7	191
Irving, E.	6	149	ish nation).....	9	242,	-----	22	567
McNeile, H.	4	105	246, 251, 254, 256, 257			Smith, Dr. Pye ..	25	650
-----	12	316	McNeile, H. ("The			Wolff, Dr.	34	855

SERMONS ON FESTIVALS.

Christmas day:			Clayton, J. jun. .	6	157	Ascension day:		
Clayton, J. jun. .	34	859	Dale, T.	34	871	Moore, H.	28	716
Mellvill, H.	39	985	Mellvill, H.	30	757	Neville, W.	28	719
Oakes, E.	10	259	-----	39	997	Whitsunday:		
Robins, S.	32	799	Noel, Baptist W. .	21	545	Harrison, Dr.	6	238
Sharp, T.	25	646	Styles, Dr.	12	320	Jay, W.	9	241
Stephens, J.	7	195	Easter day:			Trinity Sunday:		
Thompson, E.	40	1,034	Griffith, T.	23	601	Melvill, H.	19	502
Watson, R.	7	195	Jay, W.	38	951	[See also "Sermons on Doctrines."]		
Wilson, D.	23	585	Lloyd, J.	8	211	Lady day:		
Good Friday:			Pratt, J.	14	375	McCaul, Dr.	32	812
Benson, C.	14	375	West, F.	6	159	Melvill, H.	32	812

SERMONS ON BAPTISM.

Dodsworth, W. ...	31	779	Manuel Dr.	2	36	Robins, S.	37	939
Irons, W. J.	32	811	Neville, W.	28	712	[For Baptismal Regeneration, see p. 21.]		

ADDRESS ON CONFIRMATION.—Blomfield, Bp. 12 329—[See also p. 25.]

SERMONS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Dodsworth, W. ...	23	600	Leete, T. T.	37	945	Pratt, J.	23	591
Heslop, R.	12	332	Noel, Baptist W. .	7	200	Robins, S.	33	829

SERMONS ON CONVERSION AND TO THE UNCONVERTED.

Aitken, R.	30	761	Hitchen, T. (to the			911, 913, 914, 915, 917, 918, 920,		
Alexander, J.	36	906	awakened)	39	987	921, 922, 924		
Dale, T.	42	1,068	Kemp, R.	6	149	Noel, Baptist, W. .	40	1,032
Deering, W.	13	359	-----	8	227	Parsons, J.	39	992
Hamilton, R. W. .	38	961	Leifchild, Dr.	29	740	Stainforth, F. J. (to		
Hancock, W.	41	1,044	Noel, Baptist W. .	35	898	the awakened) .	43	1,019
Herschell, R. H.			-----	36	900,	Stewart, J. H.	1	5
(Hist. of his own)	34	854	902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908,			Williams, J.	38	958

ORDINATION SERMONS.

37 Priests—Blomfield, Bp.	13	359	Home Missionaries—Leifchild, Dr. .	20	527
24 Priests—-----	16	411	Jaquier, R. H.—{ Smith, Dr. J. Pye }	12	315
Cumming, J.—Brown, Dr.	20	521	{ Winter, Dr. }		
Edwards, J.—{ Steane, E. ... }	22	573	Leifchild, Dr. { Winter, Dr. }	16	431
{ Upton, J. ... }			{ Clayton, J. }		
Evison, H.—{ Smith, Dr. J. Pye .. }	4	93	Reid, J.—Wardlaw, Dr. ...	12	337
{ Smith, T. }	4	94	Weight, G. }	20	508
{ Clayton, J. jun. }	4	95	Butler, M. }		
{ Collyer, Dr. }			West, Missionary—Sibree, J.	33	838
Giles, J. E.—{ Murch, Dr. }	15	405	Woodman, C. B.—Morgan, T.	20	506
{ Giles, W. }					

SERMONS PREACHED ON ENTERING UPON A NEW CHARGE.

Burnet, Dr.—Garlickhythe	29	752	Dillon, Dr.—Clerkenwell Church ...	5	143
Burnet, J.—Camberwell ..	15	403	Ellaby, F.—West-st. Chapel, Soho .	6	158
Dale, T.—Lothbury lecture	39	984	Evison, Mr.—Clapton Chapel	3	77

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
Garwood, J.—Wheeler Chapel	22	570	Sherman, J.—Surrey Chapel	28	728
Letts, J.—St. Olave's	32	804	Taylor, W.R.—Chadwell-st.Scots'Ch.	13	356
Moore, D.—Christ Chapel	39	991	Thompson, E.—Charlotte Chapel	38	970
Mortimer, T.—Gray's Inn Lane	30	758	Townley, R.—White's-row Chapel	9	252
Page, T.—St. Paul's Cheltenham	23	585	Weight, G.—St. George's, Southwark	33	832
Palmer, W. S.—Hare-court Chapel	8	204	Williams, J.—Rateliff	33	838

SERMONS PREACHED ON OPENING OR RE-OPENING OF CHURCHES OR CHAPELS.

Birt, I.—Salters-hall Chapel	9	245	Gilbert, C.—Barnsbury Chapel	40	1,006
Blomfield, Bp.—St. Paul's Ch. Ball's Pond	11	294	James, J. A.—Weigh-house Chapel	24	607
Bowers, J.—Liverpool-rd Chapel	26	675	Jay, W.—Chapel, Mile-end	3	61
Chalmers, Dr.—Regent-sqr. Sec. Ch.	8	215	— Tottenham Court	18	467
Clarke, Dr. A.—Gt. Queen-st. Chap.	9	244	McDonald, J.—Scotch Ch., Islington	25	631
Clayton, G.—Brixton-hill Chapel	12	328	McNeile, H.—West-street Chapel	8	212
Clayton, J. jun.—Poultry Chapel	5	121	Mortimer, T.—Shoreditch Church	11	301
Collyer, Dr.—Salter's-hall Chapel	9	245	Noel, G. T.—West-street Chapel	18	212
Cooper, W. H.—Chapel, Edmonton	9	230	Parsons, J.—Chapel, Edmonton	78	229
Denison, Bp.—Trowbridge Church	34	872	— Tottenham Court	18	467-8
Dillon, Dr.—Charlotte Chapel	27	683	— Falcon-square Chapel	42	1,079
Edmonds, C.—Chapel, Tottenham	7	184	Saunders, S.—Chapel, Tottenham	7	184
Fletcher, Dr.—Chapel, Mile-end	3	65	Sibree, J.—Surrey Chapel	15	401
— Wycliff Chapel	17	454	Stephens, J.—Chapel, Edmonton	12	329

FAREWELL SERMONS.

Aitken, R. (Zion Ch. Waterloo-rd.)	38	975	Page, G. (Egham Church)	33	845
Biekersteth, E. (Wheler Chapel)	15	412	Pemberton, A. G. (Kingsbury Ch.)	41	1,051
Chalmers, Dr. (St. John's Ch. Glasgow)	2	31	Reed, Dr. (Visiting America)	23	595
Collyer, Dr. (Pavement, Moorfields)	8	206	Robins, S. (Orphan Asylum)	24	624
Dillon, Dr. (Bedford-row)	2	38	— (Christ Chapel)	39	989
Dixon, J. (City-road circuit)	24	621	Thompson, E. (Extr) (St. John's Wood)	33	966
Hesketh, W. M. (St. Dunstan's East)	24	611	— (Brunswick Chapel)	20	504
Jeans, G. (Egham Church)	26	654	Thorne, Dr. (Lock Hospital)	42	1,067
Luck, C. (St. Bride's)	42	1,066	Uwins, J. G. (Richmond Church)	23	599
Mansfield, G. (Christ Ch. Liverpool)	42	1,085	Weight, G. (Collier's-rents)	19	499
Mortimer, T. (Shoreditch Church)	29	731	Wilson, Bp. (Bedford-row)	21	530
— (Clerkenwell)	29	737	Woodroffe, T. (Wheler Chapel)	27	697
Newberry, H. J. (Christ Ch. Newgate-st)	25	637	Yate, W. (Missionary)	27	697
Noel, Hon. G. T. (Richmond)	20	522			

Deceased.

FUNERAL SERMONS.

Deceased.

Arundel, J.—Mr. Cranfield	34	854	Collyer, Dr.—Rev. W. Brown	32	803
Baker, T. B.—Rev. J. Simons	28	726	Curwen, S.—Missionary Smith	2	69
— Rev. W. Wilkinson	38	976	— Rev. Mr. Angear	33	835
Bennett, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Bogue	5	136	Davies, J. J.—Mrs. Parkinson	11	247
Binney, T.—A Young Minister	41	1,037	Dealtry, Dr.—Rev. C. Simeon	29	739
Blackburn, J.—Miss King	19	482-3	— Rev. F. Goode	42	1,088
Borrows, W.—Mr. J. B. Wilson	25	647	Delaney, D.—Mrs. Aitken	33	831
Borrows, W.—Rev. F. Goode	42	1,089	Dillon, Dr.—Miss Farr	20	525
Bradley, C.—Rev. F. Goode	42	1,088	— A Sunday School Teacher	23	589
Broadfoot, W.—Rev. Dr. Waugh	9	250	Ellaby, F.—Miss J. Topham	7	188
Brown, W.—Rev. W. Thomas	9	237	Evans, J. H.—Mr. Fox	29	509
Bunting, Dr.—Rev. R. Watson	21	533-4	— Mr. Nasmith	36	918
— Mr. L. Haslope	32	821	— Mr. Whitmore	41	1,057
Bunting, W. M.—Mrs. Bulmer	29	733	Fletcher, A.—Rev. Dr. Andrews	40	1,027
Burder, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Harris	13	361	Fletcher, Dr.—Rev. W. Orme	14	3-3
Burder, S.—Rev. S. Crowther	13	346	— Rev. G. Burder	19	591
Burns, J.—Mrs. Bradshaw	13	359	Gillmor, W. Mrs. Wadsworth	39	770
Campbell, Dr.—Mrs. Wilson	14	367	Good, J. E.—A Lady	14	339
Cartwright, J.—Rev. C. S. Hawtreay	17	456	Goode, W.—Rev. S. Crowther	13	317
Chalmers, Dr.—Rev. Dr. Thomson	16	427	Gwyther, J. H.—Miss E. Hawkes	31	856
Clarke, O.—Rev. Dr. Ryland	5	118	Hannah, Dr.—Rev. T. Lessey	40	1,065
Clayton, G.—Rev. Dr. Harris	13	360	Hill, R.—Mr. J. Wilson	6	147
— Mrs. Minchener	19	487	Hitchin, T.—Rev. J. Pinkerton	25	650
— Rev. Dr. Winter	22	568	— Mr. T. Evans	29	729
Clayton, J. junr.—Miss H. H. Cooper	5	130	Hodson, Archd.—Rev. C. Simeon	29	739
— Mr. Canning	9	231	Hodson, W.—Mrs. Teape	34	849
— Four Ministers	14	366	Hughes, J.—Rev. R. Hall	16	424
— Mrs. G. Clayton	42	1,074	Hulbert, C. A.—Rev. J. Lacy	29	733
Collyer, Dr.—Rev. J. Brooksbank	4	108	Hull, E.—Miss E. A. Cox	32	801
— Rev. J. Townsend	6	150	Jay, W.—Rev. R. Hill	21	546
— Mr. T. W. Massett	9	247	Judson, Mr.—Rev. J. S. Brooksbank	11	302
— Rev. Dr. Rippon	29	741	Kel y, D.—Mr. Hennell	41	1,063

SERMONS TO SERVANTS.

Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.	Preachers' Names.	Vols.	Nos.
Chalmers, Dr.	..	26	655	Mackenzie, W. B.	37	934	Wilson, Bp.	..... 9 255

SERMONS ON EDUCATION,

In addition to those already indexed as preached on behalf of Schools.

Blomfield, Bp.	..... 18	465	Irving, E.	... .. 4	114	Seymour, M. H.	... 32	808
Dale, T.	..... 31	786	Melvill, H.	..... 32	804	.....	... 40	1,029
Hannah, Dr.	.... 27	686	Reed, Dr.	..... 14	371	Welburn, M.	.... 35	883

SERMONS ON SUNDRY

SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

An Eclipse—Bateman, G.	..... 30	773	Queen's escape—Fearne, F. G.	..... 37	950
Pestilence—Hollis, H.	.... 29	748	Melvill, H.	.... 37	947
Melvill, H.	.. 18	473	Thompson, H.	.. 37	950
Scott, J.	..... 18	476	A coronation—Blomfield, Bp.	..... 18	460
Death by fire—Clayton, J. jun.	..... 35	882	Clayton, J. jun.	.. 18	460
Wilson, D.	.... 32	819	.....	.. 33	830
Fire at the Tower—Burns, J. C.	... 40	1,029	Kelly, D. . . . .	.... 33	829
A snow storm—Hollis, H.	..... 29	746	Vernon, W. H.	..... 33	831
A land flood—Wilton, E.	..... 39	981	Birth of a prince—Burns, J. C.	..... 40	1,031
Shipwreck—Hyatt, C.	..... 19	261	Departure of missionaries, namely:		
Saunders, I. . . . .	.... 18	461	Dr. R. Morison—	{	
Williams, W. B.	..... 5	135	Burder, Dr.	..... 6	161
Execution of a criminal—Carver, E.	.. 37	949	Morison, Dr.	..... 6	161
Cotton, W. . . . .	.. 1	5	Waugh, Dr.	..... 6	161
.....	.. 3	86	Clayton, J. jun. . . . .	..... 12	326
.....	.. 4	115	Philip, Dr.—	{	
Farrar, A. E.	30	755	Philip, Dr.	..... 12	326
Mortimer, T.	17	439—40	Wilks, M.	..... 12	326
Stiles, Dr.	2	40	Townley, H.	..... 12	327
Wood, T.	3	88	Blackburn, J.	..... 12	327
National distress—Thompson, E.	... 31	784	Burnet, J.	..... 12	327
Popular commotion—Thompson, E.	.. 42	1,073	Opening of Highbury College—		
Fast day—Chalmers, Dr.	19	491	Burder, Dr. . . . .	..... 7	186
Howels, W.	20	528	Harris, Dr. W.	..... 7	186
Irving, E.	19	489	Fortieth Anniver. of Ordin.—Jay, W.	16	425
James, W. B.	19	503	A minister's recovery from sickness—		
Noel, B. W.	19	489	Morris, C.	17	438
Day of humiliation—Bennett, Dr.			Close of the year—Beames, T.	34	872
Clayton, J. jun.	} 12	319	Bradley, C.	25	639
Dobson, T. P.			34	857	
Palmer, W. S.			25	637	
Townley, H.			34	858	
Thanksgiving day—Dale, T.	..... 21	547	Melvill, H.	..... 32	800
Gwyther, J.	21	547	Noel, B. W.	..... 36	919
Packwood, J.	22	561	.....	..... 39	977
Watkins, H. G.	22	553	Reed, Dr.	..... 23	586
Queen's escape—Croly, Dr.	.... 37	948	A new year—Mortimer, T.	..... 23	587
			Robins, S.	34	858

SERMONS ON SUNDRY SPECIAL SUBJECTS.

Affliction—Evans, J. H.	23	581	Chartism—Scott, A. J.	40	1,024, 1,026
Jay, W.	39	999	Children, death of, in judgment on		
Thorpe, W.	22	560	parents—Laing, D.	40	1,011
Africa, claims of—Knibb, W.	37	946	Children's duty to a parent's memory—		
Aged Christians—Blackburn, J.	4	101	Clayton, J. jun.	22	571
America, state of religion in—Potter, A.	17	457	Children suffering for parents' sins—		
Angels, their interest in redemption—			Melvill, H.	35	886
Watson, R.	17	453	Christian Courtesy—Binney, T.	30	755
Anxiety—Dale, T.	40	1,014	Christ's words when on the cross—		
Pratt, J.	33	839	Aitken, R.	38	975
Backsliding—Bridge, S.	41	064	Colonisation—Wilberforce, Archd. S.	41	1,059
Denham, J. F.	38	954	Commandments:—		
Kelly, D.	29	735	The ten—Bush, J.	7	194
Melvill, H.	38	954	..... Frost, R.	37	934
Parsons, J.	19	490	The second—Cox, Dr.	16	416
Behaviour in God's house—Cater, P.	5	119	The sixth—Noel, Baptist W.	33	834
Bells (Church)—Bateman, G.	31	781	The seventh—Noel, Baptist W.	33	836
Bush, the burning—McConnell, T.	9	234	The tenth—Noel, Baptist W.	33	840
Business and religion—Garwood, J.	32	805	Confirmation—Birchall, J.	26	665
Busy-body, the—Melvill, H.	41	1,046	Haslegrave, J.	30	769
Charity towards Christians who differ			Robins, S.	87	936
from us—Smith, Dr. Pye	24	626	Warren, D.	9	240

Subject.	Preacher.	Vols.	Nos.	Subject.	Preacher.	Vols.	Nos.
Conscience—Denham, J. F.		38	971	Ministerial office—Davies, J.		6	165
Melvill, H.		34	865	Fletcher, J.		22	559
Cruelty to animals—Booker, Dr.		18	460	Hutchings, W.		2	42
Greenwood, T.		13	345	Irvine, J.		39	982
Styles, Dr.		12	336	Mareh, H.		5	121
Death, why inflicted on Christians—				Melvill, H.		15	401
Stodhart, R.		21	535	Moore, D.		39	991
Deluge, the—Fletcher, Dr.		8	208	Morell, T.		3	66
Domestic happiness—Collinson, J.		30	770	Mortimer, T.		30	758
Duelling—Cooper, W. H.		14	372	Page, T.		23	585
Egypt, destiny of—Blackburn, J.		38	974	Parsons, J.		32	818
Ejaculatory prayer—James, J. A.		1	23	Smith, T.		4	94
Falls of Christians—Evans, J. H.		36	915	Stearns, Dr.		22	560
Green, S.		25	648	Tattam, H.		30	769
Kelly, D.		31	783	Thompson, E.		36	937
Fasting—Rodwell, J. M.		32	810	Woodward, J. H.		35	892
Friendly societies—Rudge, Dr.		33	830	Miracles, nature and design of—			
Gethsemane, Christ in—Hebert, C.		37	936	McNeile, H.	18	474—5	
Golden calf—Herschell, R. H.		40	1,033	Styles, Dr.	18	475	
Grace (free)—Noel, Baptist W.		40	1,013	Moral impotency, no excuse—			
Happy dying—Bradley, C.		42	1,088	Tidman, A.	15	398	
Sheppard, J.		22	575	Mysteries in religion—Dodsworth, W.	23	713	
Thorpe, W.		4	95	McNeile, H.	24	611	
Wardlaw, Dr.		32	809	Night counsels from God—			
Harvest—Binney, T.		15	405	Hankinson, T. E.	32	802	
Blackburn, J.		9	241	Paradise of Eden—Harris, Dr. W.	7	193	
Hambleton, J.		38	955	Noel, Baptist W.	41	1,041	
Jackson, T.		42	1,073	Particular Providence—			
Rudge, Dr.	22	572-78		Clarke, Dr. A.	15	404	
Stratten, J.		38	959	Clayton, J. jun.	12	318	
Hearing sermons—Thornton, J.		1	29	Melvill, H.	21	539	
Heathen, salvation of—Seymour, M. H.		40	1,010	Robins, S.	34	868	
Heaven—Mortimer, T.		41	1,050	Watson, R.	16	415	
Noel, Baptist, W.		36	915	Passover, the—Herschell, R. H.	34	871	
Parsons, J.		30	761	Patriotism—Collyer, Dr.	19	500	
Hell—Seymour, M. H.		41	1,048	Poor, relief of the—Chalmers, Dr.	19	497	
Hell eternal—Melvill, H.		36	917	Poverty—Bradley, C.	39	997	
Noel, Baptist W.	36	904—5		McNeile, H.	20	524	
Industry—Melvill, H.		40	1,028	Melvill, H.	20	520	
Robins, S.		42	1,086	Stowell, H.	24	605	
Infant salvation—Cumming, J.		41	1,045	Power of God—Denham, J. F.	23	654	
Infidelity—Parsons, J.		19	490	Prayer—Almond, G.	8	224	
Judgment (the last)—Carter, W.		6	147	Chalmers, Dr.	19	491	
Hughes, Henry.		27	691	Dillon, Dr.	31	779	
James, J. A.		40	1,012	Hodson, W.	33	832	
Krummacher, Dr.		39	996	Horton, J.	40	1,017	
Melvill, H.		16	425	Miller, J.	2	45	
Reece, Mr.		3	76	Noel, Baptist W.	42	1,087	
Ruell, D.		7	194	Waugh, Dr.	3	87	
Languages, diversity of—				Praising the dead—Clayton, J. jun.	33	837	
Beamish, H. H.	{	14	388	Public life, dangers of—Lacey, H.	1	26	
		15	394	Public social worship—Birt, E.	10	268	
London, state and claims of—				Blomfield, Bp.	11	301	
Blackburn, J.		7	190		16	415	
McNeile, H.		8	208	Dale, T.	40	1,021	
Noel Baptist W.		30	767	Hall, R.	15	462	
Lord's prayer—Weight, G.		34	860	James, J. A.	15	406	
-----		34	869	Quaker sentiments—Miller, F.	29	735	
-----		35	873	Reading—Hawes, Dr.	19	494—5	
Marriage—Cater, P.		3	65	Reason, province of—Owen, J. B.	25	645	
Collyer, Dr.		29	752	Rehabites, the—Rennell, T.	1	22	
Marriage service—Pinder, J. H.		30	756	Recognition in eternity—Dillon, Dr.	23	589	
Marriage (the Queen's)—				Responsibility of man—Melvill, H.	37	935	
Clayton, J. jun.		37	927	Sabbath breaking—Robinson, R.	2	242	
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